

HISTORY OF THE FARA'IDI MOVEMENT

Dr. Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan



ISLAMIC FOUNDATION BANGLADESH

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IN MEMORY
OF

*My great grandfather
Mawlana 'Abd al-Hakim
whose
Tradition of scholarship
has been a major source
of
my inspiration.*

25 अप्रैल 2012

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Bangladesh is the second largest Muslim country of the world in terms of population. Emergence of Bangladesh as an independent Muslim state in 1971 was the culmination of a long historical process that initiated with the first ever contact of Islam with territories which had come to be known as Bengal later on. History of Bangladesh is yet to be written and this history is inexorably connected with the growth and development of Muslim community in Bangladesh and the areas that surround it.

The author of the following pages, Dr. Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan, is a great Islamic scholar and reputed historian in his own right. The present volume "History of the Fara'idi Movement" is the result of his strenuous research work dedicated to the cause of unearthing that glorious chapter of our national history which has come to be known as "Fara'idi Movement". In this work of historic importance, he not only gave a complete account of the Movement along with its socio-political background and the impact that it created on the subsequent history of the Nation, but also successfully dashed to the ground the false notions of motivated lies built around this great Movement and its leaders over the years.

We are thankful to Allah Almighty for enabling us to bring out this wonderful work of national importance on behalf of the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.

Islamic Foundation
Bangladesh
1. 10. 1984

Abdul Ghafur
Director of Publication

FOREWORD

History of the Fara'idi Movement is a social history of the nineteenth century Muslim community of Bengal. The movement was a part of the Islamic revivalism, which had become a widespread phenomenon around the Muslim world during the time, which was nick named by the Westerners and the local opponents as Wahabism.

Haji Shariat Allah's Farai'di movement in the then Eastern Bengal and Shahid Titu Mir's Jihad movement in Western Bengal, were potent symptoms of the Muslim reaction to the Western imperialism. These movements played a significant role in moulding the national psychology of the Bengali Muslims.

Yet, little was known about the Fara'idi movement prior to the publication of the present work. This study brings out into historical perspective a blurred chapter of the social history of Bangladesh. It aimed socially and religiously at purging the Muslim society of un-Islamic accretions as well as still surviving pre-Islamic local customs ; so as to clean up the Islamic spirit in the hearts of the Muslims. It economically aimed at protecting the peasantry, Muslims, Hindu or Nama-Sudra all like, from the oppression of the newly created Baron-type of Marwari and commercial zemindars, who were the exploitative instrument of the British imperialists. And politically, it endeavoured to organise the Muslim masses into a Islamically Co operative brotherhood with a view to forging their unity and solidarity for the preservation of their self-identity as a Muslim community. It also endeavoured to galvanize

their spirit of jihad and struggle for directing their way towards achieving freedom from the foreign yoke.

The study is the revised edition of a doctoral thesis approved by the University of Dhaka for the conferment of the Degree of Ph. D. in 1961. It was worked out under the guidance of Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani, the famous archaeologist of Pakistan.

One of its examiners Dr. I.H. Qureshi observes: "The candidate has utilised several sources of information which hitherto were not easily available to scholars. He has succeeded in giving a clear, well documented and informative account of the Movement... In my opinion the thesis is of sufficient merit for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Dhaka."

Another examiner Dr. Mahmud Husain says: "Mr. Khan has apparently worked hard and given much thought to the subject of his study. He has been able to lay his hand on extensive and scattered material in several languages—Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Bengali and English. He has put this material to excellent use and succeeded in producing a first rate thesis. He deals with the subject in a systematic and scientific way, and his style of writing is attractive.

"In my opinion, the thesis is of such merit as to entitle Mr. Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan to the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the Universiy of Dacca."

The sponsor examiner Dr. A. R. Mallick says: "The plan as well as the execution of this work has been, on the whole, satisfactory. The scope of the thesis, both in point of time and the geographical areas it covers, has been what it should be the study has, therefore, been productive academically rewarding.

"The thesis on the whole is acceptable for the degree of Ph. D. the candidate, Muin-ud Din Ahmad Khan knows the technique of research and has used it profitably while executing this work.... He is endowed with a critical bent of mind and has the ability to handle and use, to his advantage, a wide variety of sources. He has made some distinct contributions in this field of study and has brought into light some indigenous sources hitherto unknown or unused.

"I, therefore, recommend that the thesis be accepted for the degree of Ph.D. in History in the Faculty of Arts."

As we know very well, Dr. Khan has long been engaged in the field of historical research on the Muslim community and has produced (1) A Bibliographical Introduction to Modern Islamic Development in India and Pakistan, (2) Selection from the Bengal Government Records on Wahhabi Trials of 1863-1870 (both published by the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, presently Bangladesh, Dhaka), (3) Muslim struggle for freedom in Bengal 1757-1947 (published by the government of East Pakistan Press, presently Bangladesh Government Press, Tejgaon, Dhaka) and (4) The first edition of the present work was brought out by the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi in 1965. His another important work on Bengal namely, 'Titu Mir and His Followers in British Indian Records' has already been published by the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.

The present work has become widely accepted by the historians, sociologists and political scientists of this Sub-continent as well as in Europe and America and as it has gone out of print and its second edition has come under great demand, which persuaded the Islamic Foundation to reprint it.

A. Z. M. Shamsul Alam
(Ex-Director General)
Islamic Foundation Bangladesh

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The present work is an attempt to study a significant phase of the nineteenth century Islamic revivalism as it affected Bengal. Islamic revivalism in this century was a worldwide phenomenon, but it had different colours in different countries. In the sub-continent of India and Pakistan Shāh Wali Allāh was the dominating influence as far as north India was concerned. The subsequent growth of his religious teachings spread out in Bengal, but here the founder of the *Fara'idi* movement, Haji Sharī'at Allāh, was directly inspired by Arab puritanism. His movement is inseparably linked up with the socio-economic life of the Muslims of Bengal who formed the large majority of the rural populace in this riverine province. This puritan movement had a double aspect : to purge the Muslim peasantry of their age long un-Islamic beliefs and practices, and at the same time to defend their reformed religion against the vested interests of the farm and plantation landlords. The first is the religious aspect which has to be understood in the general background of religious revivalism, while the second is the socio-economic phenomena as it affected the life of the rural Muslim populace. The spread of the *Fara'idi* movement along the riverine tracts of lower Bengal from its centre in the Faridpur district clearly brings into view the local geographical factors that underlay its general popularity among the peasant classes. This rural pattern of the *Fara'idi* movement is in clear contrast with the urbanism of the north Indian religious revivalism.

In the following pages, after a discussion of the original sources on which the main thesis based, an

attempt is made to give first a wider background, in which each aspect is properly defined and characterised. Then follow full details about the *Fara'idi* leaders, their religious doctrines, the social organisation and the geographical pattern of the spread of the movement. In one chapter the *Fara'idi* doctrines are contrasted with a later-day influence and opposition from other religious beliefs. Throughout, the attempt is made to study intensively the *Fara'idi* movement and place it in the wider context of the Islamic revivalism of the nineteenth century in general and link it with the life of the Muslims of Bengal in particular.

Originally, it was a thesis submitted to the University of Dhaka on 25 January, 1960 and approved for the degree of Ph. D. in 1961. I am deeply thankful to the examiners, Dr. I. H. Qureshi, Dr. Mahmud Husain, and Dr. A. R. Mallick for their very kind words about this humble study. I should like to express my gratitude to my teacher and guide Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani, but for whose constant help and encouragement the present work might not have materialised. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my old teacher Shamshul 'Ulama Mawlana Wilayat Husain as well as to Dr. A. Halim and Mr. S. M. Ikram for generous encouragement and constructive suggestion extended to me while this work was in the process of preparation. I should also like to acknowledge with thanks and appreciation the invaluable help rendered to me by Mawlawi Sirajul Haq of Comilla in transcribing Arabic, Persian and Urdu passages, and by Dr. Mushtaqur Rahman of the University of Karachi and Mirza Mahmud Baig of the Department of Archaeology, Karachi in drawing up the map.

I am deeply thankful to the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, (presently Bangladesh) Dhaka for sponsoring the

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

If there is enough vitality in a particular field of human learning, a research work should normally be superseded in 10 years time. The present study was produced in 1960 A. D. in the advanced historical method obtaining at the time. It had superseded (a) the descriptive method of Ishwari Prasad, (b) comparative method of K. S. Lal, (c) imaginative method of R. C. Majumdar and (d) the critical-analytical method of Mahdi Hasan. And with (e) the following archaeological that is to say, perspective-analysis methodology of Ahmad Hasan Dani, we tried to combine in it, (f) a critical descriptive flavour based on sociological type of field work. Unfortunately for the historical researchers and fortunately for this study, I have nothing at hand so far necessitating modification, alteration or amendment in its present form. It is, therefore, being sent to the Press in its original form.

In his Foreword to the first edition my teacher and guide Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani, presently Professor of Humanities, Islamabad University, had commended this study in the following words (July 16, 1964) :

"Nineteenth century produced widespread reform movements in the Muslim world. All of them shaped on religious bias and claimed to purify the current notions gathered round Islam and win back pristine purity. This sudden realization or re-awakening to the original pure faith must be linked up with a reaction against the lowest ebb of decadence that the Muslim world was then plunged in. Hemmed in by the European Powers and reduced either to political servility as in India or to politico-economic strain as in Western Asia and North Africa, the Muslims found themselves

in a deplorable plight which needed immediate cure. Why the first reaction was coloured by religious reform, yet remains to be answered. Is this tendency peculiar to the followers of Islam? Meanwhile the studies so far made have so much overemphasized the part played by the so-called *Wahhabi* movement of Arabia that all other reform movements are treated as its offshoots. This confusion leaves little room for analyzing the local and historical currents that impaired the movements in different areas. It is time that the underlying forces should be examined so as to place these movements in proper perspective of socio-cultural developments. After all, man being human, the guiding factor must be common, and inducement to these common ideas must be sought in particular conditions.

"In order to answer part of this question, I suggested to my former pupil Mr. (now Dr.) Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan to take up the theme of the present book for his doctoral thesis. He has been able to put forward a new point with reference to the *Fara'idi* movement in Bengal in the hope that similar treatment of themes akin to it may produce a better picture of the reform movements in particular and of the potentiality of Islam in general."

I am very much grateful to the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (formerly Pakistan) for granting me a Research Scholarship in 1958-1959 A. D. for carrying on my researches on Islamic religious movements in Bengal and to the Pakistan Historical Society of Pakistan for bringing out of its first edition in 1965 and finally to the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh for undertaking the publication of its second printing.

University of Chittagong
February 5, 1980

M. A. K.

(o)

present study and for extending a research scholarship to me and to the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, for undertaking its publication.

Finally, it is a pleasant duty to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Abdul Karim of the University of Dhaka, but for whose deep interest and thorough criticism this work might not have attained the present standard.

UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI :

M. A. KHAN

The 20th October, 1964.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

(i) For Arabic, Urdu and Persian :

' = a	و = s
و = b	و = d
پ = p	ل = ئ
ت = t	ك = ظ
ٹ = t	ع = '
ٿ = gh	غ = gh
ج = j	ڏ = f
ڙ = gh	ڙ = q
ٻ = h	ڻ = k
ڙ = kh	ڙ = g
ڊ = d	ڏ = l
ڏ = dh	ڻ = m
ڙ = r	ڙ = n
ڙ = rh	ڻ = n
ڙ = z	ڙ = w
ڙ = zh	ڙ = h
ڻ = s	ڻ = '
ڻ = sh	ڻ = y

Vowels Diphthongs, etc.

	Arabic	Urdu & Persian
Short vowels	أ, إ, ع	ا, ی, ۹
Long vowels	أ, إ, ع	ا, ی, ۹, ئ, ۶
ـ (alif maqṣūrah)	ـ	ـ
Long vowels with <i>tashdīd</i>	يـah, ـuwah	ـyah, ـwah
Diphthongs	ـaw, ـay	ـaw, ـay
ـــ (tā marbū`ah)	ـــ	ـــ

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

(ii) For Bengali

অ=a	ঢ=dh
আ=া	ণ=n
ই=i	ত=t
ঐ=ି	থ=th
উ=u	দ=d
ঔ=ା	ধ=dh
ঞ=r̥i	ন=n
ণ=e	প=p
ঐ=ai	ফ=ph
ঁ=o	ব=b
ঔ=au	ভ=bh
ঁ=k	ম=m
ঁ=kh	য=y
ঁ=g	ৰ=r̥
ঁ=gh	ল=l
ঁ=n	ৰ=v
চ=ch	শ=s
ঁ=chh	ষ=sh
ঁ=j	স=s
ঁ=jh	হ=h
ঁ=n	ড=r̥
ঁ=t	ঝ=y
ঁ=th	ঁ=m
ঁ=d	ঁ=h
	ঁ=n

ABBREVIATIONS

- H. Beveridge *District of Bakarganj (The District of Bakarganj, its History and Statistics, London, 1876).*
- James Taylor *Topography (A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dhaka, Calcutta, 1840).*
- James Wise *Eastern Bengal (Notes on the Races, Castes and Traders of Eastern Bengal, London, 1884).*
- J. A. S. B. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.*
- J. A. S. P. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dhaka.*
- J. E. Gastrell *Jessore, Fureedpore and Bakergunge (Geographical and Statistical Report of the Districts of Jessore, Fureedpore and Bakergunge, Calcutta, 1868).*
- J. P. H. S. *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi.*
- Mallick *British Policy (Dr. Azizur Rahman Mallick; British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal 1757-1856: a study of the development of the Muslims in Bengal with special reference to their education, Dhaka, 1961).*
- Trial of Dudu Miyan: (*Translation of the Proceedings held in two cases tried in 1847 before the session Judge of Dhaka in which Doodoo Meea and his Followers belonging to the sect of Hadjees or Ferazees were charged with Wounding, Plunder, Arson &c., Calcutta, 1840*).

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PART I

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER ONE

SOURCES

This study on the growth and development of the Farā'iḍī movement covers roughly the period from A.D. 1818 to 1906, *i.e.*, from the date of inception of the movement down to the death of the last head of the Farā'iḍīs, Khan Bahādur Sa'īd al-Dīn Ahmad, the father of the present head, Abā Khalid Rashid al-Din Ahmad alias Badshāh Miyan¹. Other religious reform movements, namely Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and its different later factions², have been discussed only in so far as it was necessary to bring out the background and perspective of the Farā'iḍī movement. In collecting data for this study, the necessity of going back to the original sources was constantly kept in mind ; even so, the original sources were not accepted without critical scrutiny.

The social and religious conditions of the Muslims in Bengal during the nineteenth century have so far been left in obscurity. A number of socio-economic upheavals, often under the patronage of religious reform movements including the peasant agitation led by the Farā'iḍī leader Dudu Miyan, created a good deal of commotion in the rural society of Bengal from A.D. 1830 to 1870, which repeatedly drew the attention of the government³.

1 It is regretted that *Badshah Miyan* died on the 13th December, 1959, when this study was completed. He is now succeeded by his eldest son *Muhsin al-Din Ahmad* alias *Dudu Miyan*.

2 See *infra.*, Chapter II, section A.

3 W.W. Hunter's *Our Indian Musalmans, are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?* (London, A.D. 1871), is an assessment of the political implications of this commotion of the Muslim society for which he was commissioned by the government.

A few scholars, such as James Wise, W.W. Hunter and Sayyid Amir 'Ali, also took considerable interest in the socio-religious aspects of the Muslim society of Bengal, especially during the later half of the nineteenth century. Wise made an outline of different religious and professional groups of Muslims including those who attempted to introduce religious reforms¹. Hunter made an attempt to study the political implications of the religious reform movements², and Amir 'Ali tried to ascertain the position of the rapidly disappearing Muslim upper class³. Two modern studies, completed in recent years, have devoted considerable space to the nineteenth century Muslim socio-religious movements in Bengal though their main concern lies with different subjects. One is Dr. A.R. Mallick's study of the modern educational development of the Muslims of Bengal and Bihar⁴ and the other Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari's study of the Wahhābi doctrines⁵. Besides, a few articles have also been published by different authors about the Fara'idi and other socio-religious movements. In these studies, the Fara'idi movement did not receive as much attention as it.

1. See James Wise : *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, A.D. 1884 (printed a few copies for the private use of the Government).

2 See foot note No. 3 in page 1.

3 See Syed Ameer Ali : "A Cry for the Indian Mahomedans" "Nineteenth Century", New York, vol. xii, A.D. 1882, p. 183f.

4 Dr. A. R. Mallick : *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal, 1757-1856, a study of the Development of the Muslims in Bengal with special references to their education*, Dacca, 1961.

5 Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari : *A Comparative Study of the Early Wahabi Doctrines and Contemporary Reform Movements in Indian Islam* (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Queen's College, Oxford University, 1953).

deserves in its socio-religious as well as in its socio-economic aspects.

Important sources which are utilised here fall under the following heads :-

- A. Farā'idi sources.
- B. Contemporary sources throwing light on the Farā'idi movement.
- C. Sources throwing light on the contemporary socio-religious conditions of the Muslims of Bengal.
- D. Government records.

A. Farā'idi Sources

We have recovered a variety of Farā'idi sources from different parts of East Pakistan, such as inscription, document, fatwā, (*i.e.*, legal decision), and *puthi* (*i.e.*, folk literature), which, put together, give us a fair idea of the general direction of the movement. They are described below :

(i) Tomb inscription of Hājī Shari'at Allāh, the founder of the Farā'idi movement. The existence of this inscription was not known to the scholars before 1957, when it was recovered by the present writer from the descendants of Hājī shari'at Allāh. It was then critically examined, edited and published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan¹.

It consists of ten lines of commentary on the life and character of Hājī Shari'at Allāh in Arabic language, which enabled us for the first time to fix decisively the chronology of his life and to make a number of important corrections of the views advanced by earlier writers including in the Encyclopaedia of Islam. It was originally fixed in the surrounding wall of the Hājī's grave. But

¹ See J.A.S.P., vol. iii, 1958, pp. 187-98.

when the site of his grave began to be washed away by the river Arialkhān (Padma), not long after his death, the inscription was collected by Dudu Miyān (the Hājī's son) and preserved at his residence. In 1957, at the request of the present writer, the inscription was presented to the Asiatic Society of Pakistan (Dhaka) as a gift by Mawlāwī Abā Khalid Rashīd al-Dīn Ahmad alias Bādshāh Miyān, the grandson of Dudu Miyān and the present head of the Farā'idiś, which he inherited from his father Khān Bahādur Sa'id al-Dīn Ahmad, on Bādshāh Miyān's election to the headship in A.D. 1906.

It has, however, been brought to our notice that some visitors to the Dhaka Museum where the inscription is preserved, questioned its genuineness on the ground that the Farā'idiś opposed building mausoleum and even to raising the ground on the grave ; and that the stone inscription may have been made long after the death of Hājī Shari'at Allāh. In addition to our treatment of the inscription referred to above, it may, therefore, be pointed out that in the first place, being a tomb inscription it must have been made after the death of the Hājī, and on the basis of textual evidence we observed in our article that it was prepared long after the death of Hājī Shari'at Allāh. Secondly, we have accepted the statement of Bādshāh Miyān that it was made by Dudu Miyān, the son of the Hājī, because it is more or less immaterial for us to dispute as to whether it was made by Dudu Miyān or by one of his sons. For, the date of the Hājī's death as supplied by the inscription (on the basis of which we have drawn all our conclusions there from) is supported by evidences from contemporary writings, especially that of James Taylor. Taylor signed the preface of his book *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, on the 30th March, 1839, and says that during the ten years

from A.D. 1828, the Farā'idi movement made rapid progress. He further adds that while he was writing this, Hājī Shari'at Allāh was put under the ban of the Police¹. The inscription gives the date of the Hājī's death as the 10th Dhi'l-Qa'dah, A.H. 1255/16th January, 1840². There is, therefore, nothing unusual in it. Even if it was forged by the descendants of Hājī Shari'at Allāh, we have no reason not to accept it, for the son and grandsons of the Hājī are more reliable on this matter than any other person. Thirdly, it is true that the Farā'idis oppose building mausoleum or raising ground on the grave. But they do not object to erecting surrounding walls on the grave as is seen in the case of Dudu Miyān's grave at the Bansal Road, Dhaka³ and in that of Munir al-Din Khalīfah, the earliest and most prominent Farā'idi leader of Chandpur in Tippera district⁴. These graves have boundary walls though the graves themselves are flat.

(ii) A handwritten document, composed on a stamp paper and signed by Dudu Miyān on the 22nd Paus, B.S. 1255/4th January, 1849, giving power of legal attorney to Munshi Faid al-Dīn Mukhtār, has been recovered recently by the present writer, from the descendants of Dudu Miyān. Being a legal document, it was registered in the law court on the 15th January, 1849. It is written in Bengali language and consists of over 56 lines. It is carefully examined and published with English translation and comments in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan⁵.

1 Cf. James Taylor : *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, Calcutta, A. D. 1840, p.250

2 See J.A.S.P., vol. iii, 1958, p. 189.

3 See *infra.*, Chapter iv, p. 46.

4 See *infra.*, Appendix "E", p. 131.

5 See J.A.S.P. vol. vi, 1961, pp.124-131.

History of the Farā'idi Movement :

(iii) A fatwā (i.e., legal decision) on the unlawfulness of holding congregational prayers of Friday and 'Id in the villages of Bengal. This is an important document, composed in mixed Arabic and Urdu languages (most of the Urdu portion being the translation of Arabic passages) and printed on a big sheet of paper measuring $16\frac{1}{2} \times 26\frac{1}{2}$ inches and consisting 91 lines in small script. It was sponsored by Mawlawī Abu Yahyā Muhammad Nūr al-Dīn son of the famous Farā'idi theologian Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār of Faridpur district, and was approved and signed by twenty Farā'idi theologians of Eastern Bengal. It gives in a nutshell the views and arguments of the Farā'idis on the subject.

The document was printed apparently during the first decade of the twentieth century (sometimes after A.D. 1903) for distribution among the Farā'idi khalifahs with a view to equip them for withstanding the criticism of their opponents. This copy of the fatwā was recovered by the present writer from a village in the Chandpur subdivision of Tippera district in 1958, and thus far it proves to be a rare document as no other copy of the same has come to light.

It may be observed that its preparation at a later date does not minimise its importance. In the first place, the basic points advanced by this fatwā are corroborated by the proceedings of the famous debate held in A.D. 1867 between Khalifah 'Aad al-Jabbār and Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī of Jawnpūr, as recorded by the latter². Secondly, the corroboration is also found in two Farā'idi Puthis, published about the same time³. The preparation of the fatwā

1 For the identity of Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbar see *infra.*, Appendix 'H', p. 146.

2 See *infra.*, Chapter vii, p. 94 ff.

3 See *infra.*

and the publication of the *puthis* dealing elaborately with the question of holding the congregational prayer of Friday at this later date point to the growing intensity of the conflict between the Farā'idiṣ and their opponents on this subject. This fatwā has enabled us to make a comprehensive study of the Farā'idi views on the subject.¹

(iv) Durr-i-Muhammad *Puthi*, pp. 9-138, in Bengali language dealing with Farā'idi doctrines and the life and character of the Farā'idi leaders. The first 8 pages of the work and a few pages at the end, are missing. From the textual evidence, the completion and publication of the work can be definitely dated in between 1903 and 1906, i.e., before the death of Khān Bahādur Saīd al-Dīn Aḥmad.

The name of the author, Durr-i-Muhammad, occurs frequently in the text (i.e., in the bhanitā), which may be *nom de plume* of the author. But, since the title page is missing, no other name of the author or the title of the *puthi* could be recovered. In the first place, no other copy of the *puthi* has so far come to light, and secondly, though many old Farā'idiṣ including Badāshāh Miyān, recognise the book, are unable to say who was Durr-i-Muhammad. Hence, we have no alternative but to refer to the work as *Puthi* and to the author as Durr-i-Muhammad.

Although the *Puthi* is written in Bengali language, the preponderance of Arabic and Persian words in the composition indicates that the writer was a skilful theologian. The mode of argument of the author is also worthy of our notice. Every new argument is begun with a tag or a passage from the Qur'ān, Prophetic tradition, fatwā or

1 See *infra.*, Chapter vi, p. 72, ff.

any other book of religion, which is reproduced in the original Arabic, Persian or Urdu, and the Bengali portion which follows represents an exposition of the quotation. Hence, we find about 57 quotations of this kind, which, put together even independently of the Bengali, give us a fair idea of the Fara'idi doctrines. The content of this *puthi* is broadly corroborated by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī's proceedings referred to above and by the other *puthi* described next.

(v) Nāzim al-Dīn : Puthi, pp. 1-120, in Bengali dealing with Farā'idi doctrines. The title page and the preface of the work and a few pages at the end of the book, are missing. The middle and the major portion of the *puthi*, i.e., from page 16 to page 111, is a reproduction of Durr-i-Muhammad's *Puthi* from page 32 to page 138, except that the author of this work, Nāzim al-Dīn, inserted his own name in the bhanitā in place of Durr-i-Muhammad. Moreover, as the later portion of Durr-i-Muhammad's *puthi*, i.e., following the page 138, is missing and as no other copy is available, it is not possible to ascertain whether the last portion of Nāzim al-Dīn's work, i.e., from page 111 to 120, is also reproduction of the former or not.

The first 31 and odd pages of Nāzim al-Dīn's work gives us an idea of the Farā'idi attitude towards the important problems of ijtihād (i.e., the principle of fresh investigation into the points of law and rules of morality) and taqlīd (i.e., imitation of the authoritative prescriptions of the schools of law). We may, therefore, regard Nāzim al-Dīn's work as the reproduction of the important portion of Durr-i-Muhammad's *Puthi* with an introduction.

The above evidence at first suggested to us the possibility of the identification of Nāzim al-Din with Durr-i-Muhammad. But the present head of the Farā'idiś, namely Bādshāh Miyān, who succeeded to the headship in A.D. 1906, rejects the suggestion categorically. He knew Mawlawī Nāzim al-Dīn as a learned theologian being an authority on the rules of law and morality, and as a constant companion of his father, Khān Bahādur Sa'īd al-Dīn ; but he is not known to have assumed the pen name Durr-i-Muhammad. From the biographical data of Khān Bahādur Sa'īd al-Dīn, we know further that Mawlawī Nāzim al-Dīn accompanied the former to the health resort of Madhupur in Bihār in A.D. 1906 and was present there on the occasion of the Khān Bahādur's death. Moreover, the comparison of the language in the introductory portion of the work with that of the rest which corresponds to Durr-i-Muhammad's *Puthi*, shows a palpable difference between the two portions. For Durr-i-Muhammad's language is more flowing and far richer than that of Nāzim al-Dīn's. Hence, the only alternative, left at our disposal, is to regard Nāzim al-Dīn's *puthi* as a plagiarism. Nevertheless, knowing fully well that Nāzim al-Din was a Farā'idi theologian, plagiarism makes no difference for our purpose, as we are more interested in utilizing it for knowing the Farā'idi doctrines than in ascertaining the character of its author.

(vi) Wazīr 'Ali : M'uslim Ratnahār, being a sketch of life and career of the Farā'idi leaders from the earliest time down to B. S. 1335. It was published about 30 years back and is somewhat carelessly written. It is in the form of a *Puthi* and consists of 55 pages. It has been utilised sparingly in the present study and that is only when corroboration was found in other sources.

(vii) Munshi 'Abd al-Halim: Haji Sharī'at Allāh, a manuscript biography of Haji Sharī'at Allāh, in Bengali, 22 folios. The author died in the year 1928 or 1929, at the age of 70. The manuscript is claimed to have been written on the basis of the family tradition of his ancestors. His grand father, Mawlawī Ihsān Allāh was, according to the present head of the Farā'idis, a contemporary of Haji Sharī'at Allāh and both of them were colleagues at the religious seminaries of Makkah. In his later life, Mawlawī Ihsān Allāh was made a Khalīfah by the Haji, and after the former's death the position of Khalīfah was inherited by his son and thereafter by his grandson, Munshi 'Abd al-Halim, the author of the manuscript. The manuscript was handed over to the present writer by Bādshāh Miyān.

The manuscript is highly informative about Haji Sharī'at Allāh's life, and has been accepted by us a collection of family traditions and on that account having relative value.

(viii) Mawlawī Adīl al-Dīn: Halāt-i-Kār Guzārī, a manuscript biography of Haji Sharī'at Allāh and his successors down to 1958, in Persian language, 27 folios. The author was a Farā'idi theologian and a disciple of khān Bahādur Sa'īd al-Dīn, the father of the present head of the Farā'idis. He was a resident of Madaripur, and died in 1958 at the age of 97. He was educated at the Muhsiniyah Madrasah, Dhaka, and began his career as a teacher at the Chandpur Madrasah. Subsequently, he was appointed Marriage Registrar (Qādī) by the government and served in that position till A.D. 1944, when he retired. He was a theologian of great renown and a poet in Persian. The present manuscript was written by him at the request of the present Head of the Farā'idis.

as is stated in the manuscript itself and personally affirmed by Bādshāh Miyān. We have not, however, utilised it very much for the lack of corroboration of many of its views by other sources.

(ix) A handwritten *sand* granted by Abā Khālid Rāshīd al-Dīn Aḥmad, the present Head of the Fara'iḍīs, confirming the hereditary right of Khilāfat of Munshi 'Irṣān al-Dīn of the village Bajarikhula in the interior of Tippera district, in A.D. 1936. The *sand* was examined by the present writer during a tour to the Fara'iḍī settlement around the village in 1958, and a true copy was taken which is now in the possession of the present writer. This is an evidence of the living influence of the Fara'iḍī movement in on attenuated from down to the present day.

B. Contemporary sources throwing light on the Fara'iḍī movement

The following accounts, as will be evident from the date they cover, furnish us more or less with a continuous picture of the growth and development of the Fara'iḍī movement. Moreover, as these sources are supplied by the opponents of the Fara'iḍīs or by those who looked at their reform Movement with suspicion, they provide us with a rich ground for collating and comparing the data derived from the Fara'iḍī sources.

(i) *Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations* (Lower Provinces) 3 April, 1832, No. 6 : *Roobukoree of the Magistrate of Dacca-Jalalpore*, 29 April, 1831 (preserved in the India Office Library, London). It is a Ru-ba-Kārī (رُوبَكَارِي) or an official report of the District magistrate of Dhaka-Jalalpur (which consisted of the Modern districts of Dhaka and Faridpur) on a criminal suit instituted against

Ḩājī shari'at Allāh and his followers for allegedly assaulting a village of their opponents in the district of Dacca in April, 1831. The document was edited and published by the present writer in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan¹.

(ii) James Taylor : *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, Calcutta, A.D. 1840, pp. 248-50 : An account of the reforms introduced by Ḥājī shari'at Allāh. The author wrote a few months before the death of the Ḥājī.

(iii) Extract from Mr. Dampier's Police report on the outrage of the Far'a'di peasantry on a Hindu zamindar of Faridpur in A.D. 1842 in *Calcutta Review*, vol. I, A.D. 1844, pp. 215-16.

(iv) *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. XLIV, 1861, *Indigo Commission, Extract from Minutes of Evidence*. p. 264f : Edward De Latour's evidence before an Inquiry Committee dated 31 July 1860 ; Reply Nos. 3916, 3917, 3918 and 3919 (India Office Library, London).

It may be noted that Edward De Latour was the Civil and Sessions Judge at the time of giving the above evidence. But earlier he served as a Magistrate in different indigo districts including Maldah and Dinajpur. In 1847, when Dudu miyān and his numerous followers were being tried at the Sessions Court of Faridpur in the case of their attack on the Panch Char indigo factory of Mr. Dunlop, De Latour was posted there as the Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector and followed up the case with interest. His evidence on the atrocities of European planters in general and on Dunlop's hostilities to Dudu Miyān in particular, therefore, provides with first hand information.

1 J.A.S.P., vol. vi, pp. 119-24.

- (v) H. Biveridge : *The District of Bakerganj, its history and statistics*, London, A.D. 1876, pp. 339-41 : Description of an outrage of the Farā'idi's on the indigo factory of Mr. Dunlop in A.D. 1846, written on the basis of two letters of a Magistrate dated the 20th February, 1847 and the 20th July, 1847.
- (vi) James Wise : *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, A.D. 1884, pp. 22-26 : A sketch of the life and career of Hāji Shari'at Allāh and Dudu Miyān.
- (vii) Col. J. E. Gastrell : *Geographical and Statistical Report of the Districts of Jesore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, Calcutta, A. D. 1866, p. 36, Nos. 150-151 : Description of the Farā'idi settlements.
- (viii) W. W. Hunter, ed. : *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, London, 2nd ed., A.D. 1885, vol. iv, pp. 398-400, "Faridpur" : Description of the later Farā'idi's.
- (ix) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali : *Tazkiyat al-'Aqa'id* (Urdu) Calcutta, A. H. 1344 (in the collection of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali's works entitled *Dhakhīrah-i-Karāmat*, published by Muhammad Sa'īd, vol. i, pp. 63-84) : Adverse criticism of the Fara'idi doctrines.
- (x) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qatī'* (Urdu), Calcutta, A.H. 1344 (in *Dhakhīrah-i-Karāmat*, vol. i, pp. 85-124) : Description of Mawlānā's meeting with Hāji Shari'at Allāh and Dudu Miyān and the proceedings of his debate with the Farā'idi theologian Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbār.
- (xi) Navin Chandra Sen : *Amār Jivan* (Bengali), Calcutta, B.S. 1317, vol. iii, pp. 142-46 and 149-55 : Description of the conflict between the Hindu zamindārs of Madaripur and the Farā'idi peasantry.

C. *Sources throwing light on the contemporary socio-economic conditions of the Muslims in Bengal.*

- (i) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali : Mukāshifat-i-Rahmat, (Urdu), Calcutta, A.H. 1344 (in Dhakhīrah-i-Karāmat, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 1-32) : Description of bid'at or sinful innovations practised by the Muslims during the nineteenth century.
- (ii) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali : Qawl-al-Thābit (Urdu), Calcutta, A.H. 1348 (in Dhakhīrah-i-Karāmat, vol. ii, pp. 1-107) : Description of un-Islamic beliefs and practices of the Muslims in Bengal.
- (iii) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali, Maqāmi' al-Mubtadī'in (Urdu) ; Calcutta A.H. 1348 (in Dhakhīrah-i-Karāmat, vol. ii, pp. 177-200) : Proceedings of the Mawlānā's debate with a supporter of local customs.
- (iv) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali : Haqq-al-Yaqīn (Urdu), Calcutta, A.H. 1348 (in Dhakhīrah-i-Karāmat, vol. ii, pp. 201-224) : Description of local socio-religious practices of the Muslims in Bengal.
- (v) Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Shakur : I'lān Wājib al-Idh'ān, Milād wa Qiyām par (Urdu), Calcutta, A.H. 1295 ; Criticism of qiyām or the practice of standing in the milād.¹

(vi) Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Ali : 'Amal bi'l-Hadīth (Persian), circa. A.D. 1837 (copy in the Asiatic Society of Pakistan) : Exposition of the Mawlawi's policy of encouraging the following of the Prophetic tradition in preference to the prescriptions of the schools of law or madhab.

(vii) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali : Quwwat al-Īmān (Urdu), Calcutta, A.H. 1253. An exposition of Mawlānā Karāmat.

1 See *infra.*, Chapter ii, "Other cults, rites, and ceremonies".

'Ali's policy of encouraging the following of the prescriptions of the schools of law in preference to following Prophetic tradition independently.

(viii) Mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbār : Jawāb-i-Quwwat al-Imān (Urdu), *circa*. A.D. 1837. A critical review of Mawlāna Karāmat 'Ali's Quwwat al-Imān.

(ix) mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbār : Taqwiyat al-muslimin fi Ittibā'-i-Sunnat-i-Sayyid al-mursalin (Urdu), Calcutta, A. H. 1256. A justification of the principle of following Prophetic tradition in preference to the prescriptions of the schools.

(x) Mawlawī 'Abd al-'Alī : Sahifat al-A'māl wa Mir'at al-Aḥwal (Persian), *circa*, A.H. 1302. A description of different social and religious groups in the Muslim society of Bengal with special reference to that of Chittagong during the later half of the nineteenth century.

(xi) Mawlawī Faiḍ Aḥmad : Fatwā on the validity of Fatiḥah in Persian (manuscript collected by the present writer from the interior of Chittagong).

(xii) Mawlawī Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir : Fath al-Mubin fī Radd-i-Zafar al-Mubin (mixed Arabic and Urdu), *circa*. A.H. 1300. A justification of the old socio-religious customs.

(xiii) Mawlawī Saif Allāh Khān ; Fatwā on the validity of milād sharif in Urdu (manuscript collected by the present writer from the interior of Chittagong).

D. Government Records.

The following documents throw considerable light on the social, religious and economic conditions of the

1 This Mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbar was a resident of Calcutta and a follower of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. He should not, therefore, be confused with the *Fara'idi khalifah 'Abd-al Jabbar*.

Muslims in Bengal during the nineteenth century and furnish us with a good deal of information about the religious reform movements of the time including the Fara'idi.

- (i) "A Police Report of the Zilah Dacca-Jalalpur, dealing with the manners and morals of the people, dated A.D. 1799" (recovered and edited by the present writer), *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*. Karachi, vol. vii, part i, 1959, pp. 24-35.
- (ii) *Selection from the Records of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, Calcutta, A.D. 1860, 1211 pages.
- (iii) *Pamphlet on India, the Great Wahhabi Case, being a full report of the Proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashamdad Khan* (at the High Court of Calcutta), Calcutta A.D. 1870.
- (iv) Lewis A. Mendes : *Report on the Proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashamdad Khan*, Part II being the appeal case of No. iii listed above in the Calcutta High Court, Calcutta, A.D. 1871.
- (v) Hāfiẓ 'Abd Allāh Ghazīpūrī : Ibrā'-i-Ahl-i-Hadīth wa'l-Qur'ān mimmā fi Jāmi' al-Shawāhid min al-Tuhmat wa'l-Buhtān (Urdu), Benaras, A.H. 1304 : Being reproduction of the proceedings of a legal suit between the Ḥanafis and the Ahl-i-Hadīth.

- (vi) *Translation of the Proceedings held in two Cases tried in 1847 before the Sessions Judge of Dhaka in which Doodoo Miyan and 63 of his Followers belonging to the Sect of Hedjees or Ferazees were charged with Wounding, Plunder, Arson &c., being the proceedings of the trial of Fara'idi leader Dudu Miyan and 63 of his followers in the case*

of their alleged attack on Mr. Dunlop's indigo factory at Panch Char involving the kidnapping of the Hindu manager of the factory. Military Orphan Press, Calcutta, 1848, 314+40 pages. It is referred to hereafter as Trial of Dudu Miyān as it is popularly known by this latter title.

(vii) Muin-ud-Din Aḥmad Khān : *Selections from Bengal Government Records on Wahhabi Trials, 1863-1870*, being selections from the records of the Government of Bengal and Madras relation to the activities of the followers of Sayyid Aḥmad Shāhid in Bengal, Bihar, Delhi and Madras. Dacca, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1961, 429 pages.

(viii) A Report of the Collector of Faridpur showing the items of taxes and illegal cesses, dated A.D. 1872 (see *infra.*, Appendix C).

(ix) A Report of the Collector of Faridpur on the numerical position of the Hindu and Muslim castes of the district, dated A.D. 1872 (see *infra.*, Appendix A).

(x) A Report of the Collector of Faridpur with regard to the rate of land revenues in the district, dated A.D. 1872 (see *infra.*, Appendix D).

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF MUSLIMS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

The name *Fara'idī* is given to the socio-religious movement started by Hājī Shari'at Allāh in A. D 1818 and continued by his followers down to the present day. The movement spread over Eastern Bengal and Assam, especially in the rural areas of East Pakisian.¹

The term "Fara'idī" is derived from the Arabic word "fara'id", plural of "faridah", which means "an obligatory duty" enjoined by Islām. The *Fara'idīs* are, therefore, those who aimed at enforcing the obligatory religious duties. They, however, interpreted the term "fara'id" in a broad sense to include all the religious duties enjoined by God and the Prophet irrespective of their importance² though they laid emphasis on the observance of five fundamental institutions (*bīrūnī*) of Islām, viz., (i) the profession of the dogma of faith (*kalimah*), (ii) attending daily prayers (*salat* or *namāz*), (iii) fasting during the month of Ramaḍān (*shawm* or *rozah*), (iv) paying poor-tax (*zakāt*), and (v) pilgrimage

1 See *infra.*, Chapter IX, p. 116 f.

2 In strict theological sense, the term "faridah" means "an obligatory duty" expressly enjoined by the *Qur'an*, in which belief as well as practice are necessary. In general, there are four gradations of religious duties that are recognised by shari'ah, viz., (i) *faridah* or obligatory duty, (ii) *wajib* or near obligatory duty, i.e., the practice of which is necessary, (iii) *sunnah* or the Prophetic usage which "ought" to be practised, and *mustahab* or the practice of which is "desirable". The *Fara'idīs* intended to enforce not only the first category of these duties but all of them as it is evident from the formula of *Tawbah* (see *infra.*, Chapter vi, p. 61).

to Makkah (hajj)¹. The object of this emphasis on the fundamental institutions was to focus the attention of the masses to the importance of their observance, as the Muslims of Bengal in their enthusiasm to celebrate various local cults, rites and ceremonies had become negligent to these fundamental duties.

Thus, from historical point of view, the Fara'idi movement was born out of the necessity for "self-correction" of the Muslim society of Bengal. This movement being the foremost of all other religious reform movements in Bengal, the credit for realising the necessity of "self-correction" for the first time, goes to its founder, Hāji Shari'at Allāh (died A.D. 1840). The fact that he identified himself with the religious school of the masses of Bengal, i.e., Hanafi madhab², is thus significant.

Secondly, from doctrinal point of view, the Fara'idis laid utmost emphasis on the necessity of adhering strictly to the doctrine of tawhid or monotheism. They were not, however, satisfied with the conventional interpretation of the doctrine, which required merely "belief" in the unity of God. They insisted also on putting this belief into practice. This, according to them, calls upon a Muslim to refrain from indulging in any belief or practice which has the remotest resemblance to polytheism. Hence, Hāji Shari'at Allāh disapproved of local cults, customs and ceremonies that had no basis in the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition, called them polytheism (*shirk*) and sinful innovation (*bid'ah*), and abolished all such deviations from the original teachings

1 For details, see *tafsir*, Chapter vi, p. 63.

2 See "Tomb Inscription of Haji Shari'at Allah" (contributed by the present writer), in J. A. S. P., vol. iii, 1958, p. 195 ff.

of Islam from the Fara'idi society'. The Fara'idi doctrine of tawhid, therefore, induced them, not only to go back to simple monotheism of the Qur'an but also to purge the Muslim society of all superstitious beliefs and practices which hedged around the original doctrines and institutions of Islam².

Thus, the Fara'idi movement can be characterised as representing a puritanic revivalism with the object of going back to the pristine Islam on the one hand, and that of purging Muslim society of all un-Islamic innovations on the other. In this context, it is worth-while to analyse how far the Fara'idi movement resembles other puritanic revivalism of the time, namely the Wahhabî movement of Arabia and Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement (wrongly called 'Indian Wahhabism') of Delhi.

Thirdly, Hâjî Shari'at Alîâh found his disciples mostly from the lower classes, such as cultivators, weavers and oil-grinder³. The Hâjî being primarily a religious reformer, confined himself to a religious programme which had little to do with the political and economic conditions of the people. But as will be seen later, the peasantry who came to the Fara'idi fold were not looked with favour by the Hindu zamindârs (landlords). The affront that arose in consequence of the hostile policy of the zamindârs, induced Dudu Miyan (the son and successor of Hâjî Shari'at Alîâh) to introduce a socio-economic programme into the Fara'idi society.⁴ He accomplished this (A.D. 1840—1862) by

1. For details, see *infra*, Chapter iii, p. 7 ff., and Chapter vi, p. 80 ff.

2 See *infra*, Section B.

3 See *infra*, Chapter vi, p. 86.

4 See *infra*, Chapter viii, p. 104 ff.

uniting the Fara'idi¹s into a compact hierarchical organisation known as khilafat system, which was purported to (i) safeguarding the interests of the Fara'idi²s from the oppressive hands of the zamindars and indigo planters on the one hand, and (ii) securing social justice amongst themselves on the other³. This socio-economic phase of the Fara'idi movement, as will be seen later, provided a platform for the peasant agitation against the oppressive zamindars, indigo planters and their agents⁴.

Thus, the Fara'idi movement may also be regarded as representing a socio-economic wave of the time. In this respect, it displayed close affinity with the religio-economic reform movement led by Titu Mir (from A.D. 1827 to 1831) in West Bengal⁵.

It may also be noted that the Fara'idi movement spread only in Eastern Bengal and Assam, especially in the rural areas. In well-established towns and cities, such as Dhaka, Comilla and Chittagong, where the Muslim upper classes had considerable influence, its appeal was practically ineffective. Furthermore, it spread most extensively in those rural areas where the Hindu zamindars held sway over the Muslim peasantry, i.e., in the districts of Bakarganj, Faridpur, Dhaka, Mymensingh and Tippera⁶. Even so, no man of consequence or wealth is known to have become a Fara'idi follower. It may, therefore, be stated as a rough generalisation that the appeal of the Fara'idi movement was most effective amongst the lower classes of the Muslims, and that it flourished mostly in the unenlightened rural

1 *Ibid.*, p. 105 ff

2 See *infra.*, Chapters iv and viii.

3 See *infra.*, "Titu Mir's Religious Reforms".

4 See *infra.*, Chapter ix, p. 116 ff.

society of the Muslims of Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh).

The masses of the people apparently sought relief by joining the new movement, which offered them social equality¹ and safeguard from the oppression of the non-Muslim landed gentry. This socio-economic bias of the Fara'idi movement increased under the dominating personality of Dudu Miyān and became instrumental to the spread of the Fara'idi influence throughout Eastern Bengal. For, he mainly asserted the rights of the peasantry against the zamindārs and indigo planters, and it is, therefore, natural that the oppressed peasantry flocked under his banner. From this angle, there was hardly anything in this movement which could attract the attention of the townspeople. Hence, we find luke-warmness on the part of the Muslims living in the towns and cities who had their own peculiar problems to solve. As long as the Fara'idi leaders met the socio-economic needs of the people, it flourished extensively as we see in the time of Dudu Miyān as and its decline can be traced to the withering away of this socio-economic bias. Today the Fara'idis survive mainly as a religious group.

Thus, the Fara'idi movement was a complex historical phenomenon which represented a phase of Islamic revivalism of the time on the one hand and the socio-economic aspirations of the lower classes of the rural Bengal on the other. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Fara'idi movement be examined in the context of contemporary Islamic revivalism as well as against the socio-religious conditions of Bengal, in order to bring out the real perspective in which it grew and

1 See *infra.*, Chapter iv and viii.

developed. This is attempted in the following three sections.

SECTION A

Islamic Revivalism of the Nineteenth Century

The contemporary religious movements that may claim similarity with the *Fara'idi* movement are (i) *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* of Delhi and (ii) Wahhabī movement of Arabia. In fact, these three religious reform movements represented the Islamic revivalism of the nineteenth century, and because of certain doctrinal similarities of the *Fara'idi* with the other two movements, it has often been confused by the scholars with them. Likewise, the term "Indian Wahhabism" is applied by the European scholars to the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement. An examination of these points are, therefore, necessary.

Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah : The religious reform movement of Delhi was started by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (A.D. 1786-1831) and Shah Ismā'il Shahid (*circa.*, A.D. 1782-1831), about the same time when Hājī Shari'at Allāh inaugurated the *Fara'idi* movement in Eastern Bengal, *i.e.*, A.D. 1818. The term "Indian Wahhabism" applied to this movement by European scholars as found in Hunter's *Our Indian Musalmāns*, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and other works is not borne out by contemporary and later sources.

(i) Sayyid Ahmad Shahid says, "My ṭariqah (*i.e.*, path) is the ṭariqah of my grand father" the Prophet himself. Accordingly, "I take a full meal of dry bread

on one day and thank God ; on the other day I keep hungry and bear it with patience."¹

(ii) In A.D. 1829, an opponent of this reform movement questioned the propriety of the practice of Sayyid Ahmad, who "called his own ṭariqah as Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah".² A lengthy answer to this objection was, therefore, given by Mawlānā Irtiḍā 'Alī, a follower of the Sayyid, in which he maintained that the term was used in a general sense without any intention to exclude other ṭariqahs or paths of the ṣūfīs (*i.e.*, Muslim mystics) from being Muḥammadi (*i.e.*, the path of Muhammad).³

(iii) In A.D. 1837, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī says that some of the followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shāhīd who professed to follow the Qur'ān and Prophetic tradition by means of their own independent judgment (*ijtihād*), called themselves Muḥammadi (*i.e.*, an abbreviation of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah).⁴ It is further clear from the context that Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī meant the main body

1 Ghulam Rasul Mehr : *Jama'at-i-Mujahidin*, Lahore, 1955, p. 69
 (quoted from MS. *Majmu'ah Makatib-i-Shah Isma'il*. p. 282) :

"طريقه من طريقه جد خود سید المرسلین است - یک روز نان خشک
 سفر می خورم و شکر خدا بجا می آرم و یک روز گرسنه می مانم
 و صبر می کنم -"

2 'Abd Allah ibn Sayyid Bahadur 'Alī, ed. : *Jawad-i-Istifta Mir Muhammād 'Alī*. Matba'-i-Ahmadi, A.H. 1245/A.D. 1829, p. 9. The question reads :

"مذ هب نو احداث و طریقه بعد از تحقق فهوم ان و تعریف
 بجناب رسول خدا صلعم صحیح است یا نه ؟

آری سید احمد صاحب طریقه خود را طریقه محمدیہ می گویند -"

3 Ibid., p. 90.

4 Cf. Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī : *Quwwat al-Imān*. Calcutta, A.H. 1253/A.D. 1837, pp. 135 and 197.

of the followers of Sayyid Ahmad led by Mawlāwī Wilāyat 'Alī of Patna, who were opposed to his own group.¹ Being a follower of the Sayyid, he, however, claims himself to be a "Muhammadī" in a different sense. He explains that Sayyid Ahmad Shādīd did not apply the term "Muhammadī" to his reform movement but used it just as a collective name for the Qādiriyah, Chishtiyah, Naqshbandiyah and *Mujaddidiyah* mystic orders as reformed and practised by him. In his opinion, the Muhammadiyah did not represent a fifth mystic order but a higher level of mystic realisation in the orders mentioned above². Thus, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī called himself a Muhammadiyah in this mystic sense.

(iv) According to the family records of Mawlāwī 'Ināyat 'Alī (who from A.D. 1831 was the chief exponent of the Sayyid's doctrines in Bengal), his followers in Bengal were known as Muhammadī³.

(v) The followers of one of its successor movements, *Ahl-i-Hadīth*⁴ call themselves Muhammadī down to the present day; for, according to them, they do not follow any other *ism* but the path shown by the Prophet himself.

(vi) In the "Great Wahhābi Case" of A.D. 1870 in the Calcutta High Court, the accused persons who were

1 See *infra*, "Split among the followers of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*".

2 Cf. *Mawlāwī Karamat 'Alī : Quwwat al-Iman*, op. cit., p. 198

3 Cf. *Abd al-Rahim al-Durar al-Manthur fi Tarajim-i-Ahl-i-Sadiqpur Ilahabad* A.H. 1345, p. 133.

4 Cf. *Hafiz 'Abd al-Shakur : I'lān Wajib al-Idh'ān*, Calcutta, A.H. 1295, p. 1; and 'Ahmad 'Alī : *Aqlād-i-Muhammadī ba Madāhhab-i-Ahl-i-Hadīth* (Bengali), Khulna, B.S. 1362, pp. iii-iv (The title itself is revealing).

the followers of the Sayyid's reform movement, protested against the term "Wahhābī" applied to them and submitted that they did not regard Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb as their leader. They appealed to the Judge to refer to them as sunni, *i.e.*, the follower of the tradition of the Prophet, as distinguished from bid'ati or the follower of sinful innovation¹.

(vii) Bevan Jones says that the orthodox Mawlawis opposed the drastic reform of the followers of Sāyyid Aḥmad Shahid and 'nicknamed them Wahhābis'².

(viii) It will be seen in the following pages that the reform movement of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahid belonged to the tradition of Shāh Wali Allāh of Delhi and had no historical connection with the Wahhābi movement of Arabia, and that the basis of their doctrines were laid on different assumptions³.

The above evidence goes against the term "Wahhabism" or "Indian Wahhabism" as applied to the followers of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahid. The modern Muslim scholars of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent protest against the application of the term to this movement⁴. No generally acceptable name has, however, been suggested by the scholars so far.

1 Pamphlet on India : *The Great Wahhabi Case, being a full report of the proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashmadad Khan.* Calcutta, 1870, p. 1.

2 L. Bevan Jones : *The People of the Mosque*, London, 1932, p. 206.

3 See *infra*.

4 See Shaykh Muhammed Ikram : *Mawj-i-Kawthar*, Lahore, circa., 1948, p. 28 f. ; and *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 564.

Tasadduq Husain Khalid calls it "Targhib-i-Muhammadiyah", i.e., targhib-i-sunnat-i-Muhammadiyah, or the movement which encouraged the following of Prophetic tradition. It will be seen in the following pages that the central point of the reform programme of Sayyid Ahmad shahid and his followers was to focus attention to the necessity of following strictly the tradition of the Prophet (i.e., *ittibā'-i-sunnat*). But the term suggested above has not been used by them.

Dr. Muhamud Husain disapproves of Hunter's theory that Sayyid Ahmad's movement was an off-shoot of the Wahhabism of Arabia. He, however, refrains from suggesting an alternative nomenclature. On the other hand, he regards Muhammadiyah as a new mystic order or tariqah, founded by Sayyid Ahmad². We have seen above that the exclusive application of the term "Muhammadiyah" to mystic order is supported by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī though he contended that Sayyid Ahmad shahid used it in a collective sense to mean the four well known mystic orders. The use of the term in a mystic sense is also hinted in the second item of evidence quoted above. The use of the term "tariqah" by Sayyid Ahmad himself, as quoted above in the first item of our list, and a close examination of the context, however, does not give any indication that he used it specifically for mystic order as different from the general programme of his reform. The point, therefore, demands a careful analysis.

In the first place, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid says that his "tariqah" is the tariqah of the Prophet himself. He

1 See Abdullah Butt, ed., : *Aspect of Shah Isma'il Shahid*, Lahore, 1943, p. 65f.

2 Cf. *History of the Freedom Movement*, op. cit., pp. 564 and 572.

continues in the same passage, "My troops are like those Muhađirs (*i.e.*, those who accompanied the Prophet in his flight to Madinah), who came out to serve the interests of the religion of God and risked their lives with enthusiasm"¹. In another place of the same book, he says, "We have forsaken our family and relatives in order to carry out the injunctions of God and to revive the tradition of the Prophet".² It is, therefore, clear that in the above context he is speaking of holy war against the Sikhs of the Punjab and the revival of the tradition of the Prophet and not of his progress in the mystic path or of mystic order alone. Hence, the use of the term "*tariqah*" in this context must be understood in the literal sense, which means "a path" or "a way", and not in the specific mystic sense meaning "a mystic order".

This interpretation of "*tariqah*" is further supported by the fact that in *ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqim* (the most authentic work on the reform programme of Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd), the Sayyid divides his programme of reform into two constituent parts, which he calls *rāh* or path (the Persian equivalent of the Arabic *tariqah*), *i.e.*, (i) *rah-i-wilayat* or the path of mysticism, and (ii) *rah-i-nabuwat* or the path of prophecy, one being complementary to the other³. In other words, in his programme of reform, he attempted a synthesis of *shari'ah* (the legal system) with *tariqah* (mysticism); and as the only gate of entrance to his reform movement was through (mystic) initiation, *i.e.* *bay'at-i-tawb-h*, it is not possible to disjoint mysticism from the rest of the programme of his reform. In his

1 Ghulam Rasul Mehr : *Jama'at-i-Mujahidin*, *op. cit.*, p. 69

2 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

3 Shah Isma'il Shahid : *Sirat al-Mustaqim* (copy Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca). p. 1 f.

explanation of *bay'at-i-tawbah* (*i.e.*, the well-known procedure of initiation into the mystic orders of the *sufis*), the Sayyid says¹ :

“First of all, the seeker of this path (*i.e.*, the path of prophecy) ought to attend to the prohibitions of the *shari'ah* relating to faith, action, morality, instinct, desire and prayer. He must seek and find out (the rules) from the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition. If he possesses knowledge of the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition, he must find them out himself or else he must enlighten himself from the opinions of the learned scholars of the Prophetic tradition.”

Hence it is clear that mysticism of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was nothing specifically separate from his programme of reviving Prophetic tradition. In our opinion, therefore, the reform movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid can be fairly designated as “Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah”, the term used by him and his followers.

Tariqah-i Muhammadiyah and Wahhabism and their Affiliation : The term “Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah” means “the path of Muhammad”, *i.e.*, the true path of Islam. It belonged to the reformist tradition of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (A.D. 1703-1763). On the other hand, the Wahhabī movement of Arabia was started by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab of Najd (A.D. 1703-1792). Recently, we have shown in an article that these two great thinkers (Shah Wali Allah and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab) of the eighteenth century, having replenished their spirit from the religious seminaries of Makkah and Madinah, inaugurated an era of Islamic revivalism in the Muslim world.

1 *Shah Isma'il Shahid Sirat al-Mustaqim* (copy Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca), p. 144.

by their emphasis on the necessity of re-asserting the principle of *ijtihād* (i.e., fresh inquiry into the Qur'ān and Prophetic tradition with a view to forming independent judgment on legal question¹). From the doctrinal point of view, this implies, in the first place, rejection of the finality of the schools of law (*madhhab*) ; secondly, rejection of the principle of *taqlīd* (i.e., adherence to the prescriptions of the schools of law considering them as authoritative and right without investigating into the correctness of the reasons on which they are based) as a sound rule of religion ; and thirdly, preference of the principle of following Prophetic tradition (*ittibā'-i-sunnah*) to the prescriptions of the schools as embodied in the books of law (*fiqh*) and legal opinions (*fatawā*)².

It has been further shown in the article mentioned above that from the fourth century *Hijrah* onwards, the principle of *ijtihād* was gradually superseded by the principle of *taqlīd* among the sunnī Muslims and the four schools of law namely, Hanafī, Shāfi'i, Mālikī, and Hanbali, were recognized as authoritative and final ; so that it was deemed necessary for every sunnī to belong to one of the four schools³. Thus, the emphasis on the principle of *ijtihād* signalled a reversion of the process. Shāh Wali Allāh says that we have been invited to accept the mission of the Prophet through investigation and understanding (*ijtihād*) and not through imitation or *taqlīd* of others⁴. In a statement of policy on Wahhab-

1 See *Shah Wali Allah's Conception of Ijtihad*" (contributed by the present writer), *J.P.H.S.*, vol. vii, part iii, 1959, pp. 165 and 193 ff.

2 See *Ibid.*, p. 165 ff.

3 See *Ibid.*, p. 166 ff.

4 See *Ibid.*, pp. 179 and 186.

ism, 'Abd Allāh son of Muḥammad ibn al-Wahhāb says¹ :

"We do not claim to exercise our reason in all matters of religion...save that we follow our judgment where a point is clearly demonstrated to us in either the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah* (*i.e.*, Prophetic tradition) still in force".

This bold step taken by the two thinkers of the eighteenth century, prepared the ground for the subsequent trend of rethinking of the Islamic past and the revivalist movements of the nineteenth century drew their inspiration from this source. However similar was the emphasis laid down by these two great thinkers, the historical background against which it was set by each one of them was somewhat different which eventually also produced different results.

From historical point of view, the emphasis of Shāh Wali Allāh on the principle of *ijtihād* implied a protest against the form of orthodoxy that was prevalent in his time in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, especially as it was tightened by the compilation of *Fatāwa-i-'Alamgiri* (a huge collection of legal opinions) under the commission of Emperor Awrangzib. Shāh Wali Allāh complains that the religious scholars of his time neglected the study of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition and cared only for the *fiqh* (the science of law) and other theoretical sciences, the former for securing government posts and the latter for holding verbal duels and hair-slitting controversies among themselves.²

1 Cf. "History and Doctrines of the Wahhabis", translated into English by J. O'Kinealy, *J.A.S.B.*, vol. xiii, Calcutta, 1874, p. 68 f.

2 Cf. *Shah Wali Allah : Insaf fi Bayan-i-Sabab al-Ikhtilaf*, p. 86.

At a later time Mawlana Karamat 'Ali asserted that he belonged to the old school¹, and, on the authority of Shah Wali Allah's predecessors Shaykh 'Abd al-Haq Muḥaddith Dehlawi and Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindī (Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thāni), stated that the school of Ahl-i-Sunnat wa'l-Jamā'at (*i.e.*, the sunni school) consisted of only four schools of law, namely Hanafi, Shāfi'i, Mālikī, and Hanbali and that these schools were fixed by the consensus of the opinion of the Muslim community ('ijma') : for "whatever rules of law might have been elicited from the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition actually became manifest on these four paths and no fifth path came to light".² Shah Wali Allah being a product of the time, believed (before his visit to Makkah in A.D. 1730-1733) that imitation or taqlid of the prescription of the four schools was firmly established and the gate of ijtihād was closed.³ But, later on, when he embarked on the trend of Islamic revivalism (after his return from Makkah), he did not hesitate even to compare taqlid with the habit of the ants. He says :⁴

"They gratified themselves with taqlid and the practice of taqlid set firmly in their hearts like the habit of the ants, while they were unmindful".

Likewise, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's emphasis on the principle of ijtihād implied a protest against the system of law and morality that was prevalent in Arabia

1 Cf. *Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali* : *Quwwat al-Iman*, Calcutta, A.H. 1253, p. 292,

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 39 and 82.

3 *Shah Wali Allah* : *Mussaffa*, p. 12.

4 *Shah Wali Allah* : *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Lahore, circa. A.H. 1323, vol. i. p. 303.

under the Turkish rule.¹ The religious reforms that he advocated were twofold, viz., (i) complete acceptance of the first principle of Islām, namely the dogma ; there is no God but Allah, and (ii) purging the Muslim society of all deviation from the original teachings of Islām, which he condemned as polytheism (*shirk*) or sinful innovation (*bid'ah*). Even Greek logic was condemned and books of logic were banned.² These twofold measures were collectively called the doctrine of *tawhīd* or monotheism, and this being the central point of his reforms, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb called himself and his followers *muwahhidūn* or the protagonists of the doctrine of the unity of God, though the adversaries including the Europeans designated his reform movement as *Wahhābiyah* or Wahhabism³, by way of reproach. Thus, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb aimed at a return to the golden past of Islām, i.e., the time of the Prophet and the three succeeding generation (*salaf-i-ṣāliḥīn*).

Shāh Wali Allāh, on the other hand, sought for an integration or synthesis (*taṭbiq*) of the whole structure of Islamic tradition including its historical legacy. Hence, unlike Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, he accepted Greek syllogism as a legitimate heritage of historical Islām to be utilised for *ijtihād*.⁴ The central point of Shāh Wali Allāh's reform lay in encouraging his co-religionists to follow Prophetic tradition from the original sources, i.e.,

1 "History of the doctrines of Wahhabis", *op. cit.*, *J.A.S.B.*, vol. xiii, p. 68 f.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

3 Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. iv, Art. "*Wahhabiyah*".

4 See *J.P.H.S.* vol. vii. part iii, p. 181.

īttibā'-i-sunnah¹, in preference to following blindly the prescriptions of the schools. He, therefore, concentrated all his efforts in stimulating intellectual thinking among the Muslims of indo-Pakistan subcontinent, so as to prepare them for a comprehensive reform—social, political, economic and religious². In the context of this larger scheme, he was also desirous of purging the Muslim society of polytheistic accretions and wrote an epistle entitled *Tuhfat al-Muwahhidin* (gift of the protagonists of the doctrine of the unity of God). Like Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* (book on the doctrine of the unity of God), this work seeks to establish pure monotheism of Islam and to purge the society of all polytheism (*shirk*) and sinful innovation (*bid'ah*). These two works, therefore, provide a meeting ground between the two reformers, and it is interesting to note that Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement, which was a revolutionary outcome of the spirit of reformation bequeathed by Shāh Wali Allāh, took special cognisance of *Tuhfat al-Muwahhidin*. In fact, *Taqwiyat al-Imān* of Shāh Ismā'il Shahid, one of the most important pamphlets of the movement, has been regarded by modern scholars as an elaboration of *Tuhfat al-Muwahhidin*³.

Naturally, therefore, a remarkable similarity is observed between Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and Wahhābi movement, especially in so far as their reform measures

1 *Ibid.*, p. 186 f.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 165-194 (article of the present writer) for the socio-religious side of *Shah Wali Allah*'s reform and K.A. Nizami, "Shah Waliullah II". *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, pp. 512-541, for the economic and political side of his reform.

3 See *History of the freedom Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. 540 and 'Abd al-Rahim, tr. *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* (Urdu translation), Lahore, 1953, vol. i. p. 81.

concern with the doctrine of monotheism and purging of un-Islamic innovations, which led the European writers to identify the two reform movements and even to apply the term "Indian Wahhabism" to Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah though there is no historical evidence of any contact of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah with Wahhabism of Arabia in its formative stage.

In the first place, one of the enunciators of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah, Shāh Ismā'īl Shahid was a grandson of shāh Wali Allāh¹, and the other, Sayyid Ahmad shahid, was a student and disciple of shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz² son of shāh Wali Allāh. Both of them received their education and training under shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz at Delhi, and did not visit Arabia till A. D. 1822, when their reform movement was in the full swing. Secondly, *Taqwiyat al-Imān* of Ismā'īl Shahid the subject-matter of which has the greatest affinity with the Wahhābi doctrine of *Tawhīd* or monothesim, was written before his visit to makkah³. Thirdly, when Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Ismā'īl Shahid visited Makkah and Madinah in A.D. 1822-1823, Wahhābi movement was at a very low ebb in Arabia. Fourthly, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb rejected mysticism as an un-Islāmic innovation, whereas Shāh Wali Allāh regarded sufism as a basic psychological need for the spiritual development of man, and the Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah assigned to mystic path (*rah-i-wilāyat*) as much importance as it attached to the path of prophecy (*rah-i-nabūwwat*). Fifthly, we have seen earlier that the central objective of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah was

1 See *Abu Yaha Imam Khan Nawshahrawi : Tarajim-i-'Ulama'-Hadith-i-Hind*, Delhi, A. H. 1356, p. 69 f.

2 See *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 559 f.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 564.

the revivification of the Prophetic tradition, which was also aimed at by Shāh Wali Allāh; whereas Wahhabism revolved around the new interpretation of the doctrine of tawhid or monotheism. Thus, the identification of the two movements or to regard Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah as an off-shoot of Wahhabism has no historical or doctrinal basis. The agreement of the two in so far as the doctrine of tawhid is concerned, therefore, may have been due to similar influences exerted by Shāh Wali Allāh on Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and Muhammād Ibn ‘abd Al-Wahhāb on Wahhabism, as has been explained above.

Similarities and Differences among the Fara'idi Movement, Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and Wahhabism :—The Fara'idi doctrine of tawhid or monotheism consisted of two parts, (i) enforcement of the doctrine of the unity of God, and (ii) purging the society of all polytheistic and sinful accretions. This corresponds exactly with the Wahhābi position on the same doctrine¹. In the preface of *Taqwiyat al-Imān*, Shah Ismā'il Shahid says that the work would consist of two parts, the first part dealing with "the doctrine of tawhid" or the unity of God, and the evil consequence of shirk or polytheism. The second part would deal with the virtues of following Propetic tradition and the vices of following *bid'at* or sinful innovation². Although the second part was not completed by the author, the subjects that were earmarked for the part have been elaborately dealt with in the next publication of the movement *Sirāt al-Mustaqim*. Thus, it is evident that on the doctrine of tawhid

1 See *supra*.

2 See *Mawlawi Muhammād Isma'il Shahid* : *Taqwiyat al-Imān*, Bangalore A.H. 1371. preface by the author.

the Fara'idi, Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and the Wahhābi stood on the same ground.

This initial agreement between the Fara'idi and the two other movements, however, must not be pressed too far; for the Fara'idi also had fundamental doctrinal differences with both of them. We have seen that Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and Wahhābi movements laid emphasis on the necessity of following Prophetic tradition in preference to the prescriptions of the schools. The Fara'idi stood just the other way around.

In the first place, Hāji Shari'at Allāh has been described in his tomb inscription as a follower of the Hanafi school of law¹. Secondly, in a Fara'idi fatwā on the question of holding congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and 'Id, the authors pleaded the superiority of the Hanafi school of law to all other schools². Thirdly, in a Fara'idi Puthi ; Nāzim al-Din says :

"Now let me ask you an important question,
Have you been able to recognise the Imām (*i. e.*, Abu Hanifah) or not?
I mean, do you follow his prescriptions" ?³

"Imām A'zam [*i. e.*, Abu Hanifah] is so great and so renowned that no other can stand his example in the world.

If you learn from him,

1 See J.A.S.P., vol., iii, 1958, pp. 197-98.

2 *Fara'idi Fatwa*, recovered by the present writer (*see supra.*, chapter i, *Fara'idi Sources* No. III).

3 *Nazim al-Din Puthi*, P. 5 :

"ଏଥନ ଆଶ୍ରମ କଥା ଜିଜାନି ତୋମାରେ ।
ଚିନିଷ କି ନା ଚିନିଷ ଦେଇ ଏମାମେରେ ॥
ଅଥୀର ତକ୍ଲିଫ ତୋର କର କି ତୋମରା ।"

All doubts would be gone from your mind".¹

"Imām Abu Yusuf and Imām Muḥammad

The two students (of Imām Abu Hanifah) worked in co-operation,

And made fresh deliberation (ijtihād) on religious laws as well as on the worldly affairs,

And wrote down the books of laws (*fiqh*).

* * *

If those books were not present in the world,

None could understand aught of religion".²

Fourthly, from the earliest time down to the present day, the Fara'idis profess to be strict followers of the Hanafi school of law³.

Thus, the Fara'idis are not only the followers of the Hanafi school of law but also the supporters of the finality of the school and the principle of *taqlid*. Fundamentally, therefore, the Fara'idis followed the prescriptions of the school, in preference to the following of

1 *Ibid.*

“এত বড় এমাম আজম নামদার।
দুনিয়াতে নাহি হয় মেহাল ঝাঁহার ॥
সেই এমামের আগে নেহনা চিনিয়া।
তবে ত মনের সন্দেহ যাইবে ঘুচিয়া ॥”

2 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

“এমাম আবু ইউছুফ ছাহেব কেবার।
এমাম মোহাম্মদ রহমতুল্লান নামদার ॥
এই দুই শপ্রেদান সঙ্গেতে খিলিয়া।
এজতেহাদ করিলেন দৌনের লাগিয়া ॥
দীন আর দুনিয়ার ভালাই বুঝিয়া।
কেকার কেতাব আদি গেলেন লিখিয়া ॥

* * *

কেকার কেতাব না থাকিলে দুনিয়াতে
কোন কথা কেহ নাহি পারিত বুঝিতে ॥”

3 Information collected by the present writer from different Fara'idi settlements,

Prophetic tradition as the latter was not understandable to them without the deliberations and interpretations of the imāms or jurists of the Hanafī school. The position of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and the Wahhābī, as we have seen, was just the opposite.

Many of the followers of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah, however, claimed themselves to be Hanafī ; even Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd is said to have followed the prescriptions of the Hanafī school in most practical matters¹. Likewise, the Wahhābīs affiliated themselves to the Hanbalī school of law². But their insistence on the necessity of following only those prescriptions of the school which conformed to the Prophetic tradition, and on the principle of following Prophetic tradition in preference to the prescription of the schools wherever a point is demonstrated by a sound narration from the Prophet³, distinguished them from the blind imitators of the schools. Hence, on this important point, Farā'idiṣ stood on the opposite pole of the two other movements.

From historical point of view, there is no evidence to connect the Farā'idi movement with the tradition of Shah Wali Allāh or with Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement. Hājī Shahrīat Allāh was educated at the religious seminaries of Arabia from about A.D. 1799 to 1818⁴, and a close examination of their doctrines show that the Farā'idi and Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah belonged to two separate traditions. In the first place, the Farā'idiṣ

1 See *History of the Freedom Movement*. Karachi, 1957, p. 570.

2 See J.A.S.B., vol. xiii, p. 68 f.

3 See Mawlavi Wilayat 'Ali : 'Amal bi'-i-Hadith. circa., A.D. 1837, pp. 2, 4, 12 and 16 for the standpoint of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and J.A.S.B., vol. xiii, p. 68 f, for the standpoint of the Wahhabī.

4 See *infra*., chapter iii, p. 3.

suspended the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id* in Bengal under the British rule, which according to them were not lawful under the circumstances¹. The followers of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, on the other hand, continued to hold those prayers though they regarded India under the British rule as *Dār al-Harb* or abode of war². Secondly, the *Fara'idis* objected to initiating the ignorant masses ('awām) into mystic orders, and to the practice of initiating disciple by clasping hand (*dasti bay'ah*)³. These were, on the other hand, widely practised by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and his followers.

The biographical data of Haji Sharī'at Allāh suggest that he drew inspiration for his reform movement from Arabia, where he stayed for about 20 years and received his education and training⁴. This period being the most turbulent years of Wahhābī revolution in the process of which the Wahhābis occupied Makkah and Madīnah in A. D. 1803⁵, Haji Sharī'at Allāh had the unique opportunity to watch the progress of Wahhābism from close quarters. As the *Fara'idī* doctrine of *tawhīd* or monotheism corresponds entirely to the same doctrine of Wahhābism, we have historical evidence to assume that it was influenced by Wahhābism. This point is further corroborated by the fact that like the Wahhābī, Haji Sharī'at Allāh laid utmost emphasis on the doctrine of *tawhīd*.⁶ Nevertheless, the *Fara'idis*, as we have

1 See *infra.*, chapter vi, p. 72 ff.

2 See *History of the Freedom Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

3 See *infra.*, chapters vi and vii.

4 See *infra.*, chapter iii, p. 3 f.

5 Cf. *J.A.S.B.* vol. xiii, p. 68 f. offers documentary evidence on this point.

6 See *infra.*, chapter vi, p. 65.

just seen, were the supporters of the principle of *taqlīd*, whereas the Wahhābīs supported *ijtihād*. Secondly, the Fara'īdis accepted mysticism or sufism, as an Islamic institution and utilised it for the attainment of divine consciousness¹, which was on the other hand, rejected by the Wahhābīs who regarded it as an un-Islamic innovation. Thirdly, the Fara'īdis to the Hanafi school, and the latter referred all important questions of law to the authority of Tāhir Sombal Hanafi, the teacher and mystic guide of Hāji Shari'at Allāh². Thus, although the influence of Wahhabism on the Fara'īdi cannot be gainsaid, yet we do not have sufficient ground to identify the one with the other or even to regard the Fara'īdi movement as an off-shoot of the Wahhabī movement.

Successor Movement of Ṭariqah-i-Muḥammadiyah and their relations with the Fara'īdi Movements : Although Ṭariqah-i-Muḥammadiyah movement was started as a religious reform movement about A.D. 1818, it took a political turn within a few years and spread throughout Indo-Pakistan subcontinent with extra-ordinary rapidity. In course of time, it also split up into three distinct groups, namely the Patna school, Ta'aīyunī and Ahl-i-Hadīth. The history of the growth and development of Ṭariqah-i-Muḥammadiyah falls outside the scops of the present study. But an examination of the role played by it and its successor movements in Bengal and the nature of their contact with the Fara'īdis, is relevant to our purpose. Moreover, the intensification of religious propaganda by these successor movements in rural

1 See *infra.*, chapters vi and vii.

2 See *infra.*, chapter iii, p. 4 ff.

Bengal, their mutual antagonism and their rivalry with the Fara'idi movement have deeply affected the outlook of the Muslims of Bengal. In order to understand the attitude of the Fara'idi to these rival groups and *vice versa*, an analysis of the historical and doctrinal grounds of the split of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah is necessary.

Split among the followers of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah : The principle of preferential treatment of the Prophetic tradition (*ittibā-i-sunnah*) to the prescription of the schools of law (*taqlīd*), formed the central point in the reform programme of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah. Differences of opinion, however, appear to have arisen amongst the leaders of the movement, especially after the death of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Shah Isma'il Shahid at the battle of Balakot in A.D. 1831. From about A.D. 1837 to 1840, three leading disciples of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid came out with three somewhat distinct views relating to the point mentioned above. The first was advanced by Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Ali, the chief successor of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid¹, who reiterated the policy of Ṭariqah-i-Muhammadiyah giving preference to the Prophetic tradition. The second view was advanced by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali of Jawnpur, a leading disciple of

1 *Mawlavi Wilayat 'Ali* (A. D. 1790-1852) was a theologian of Patna who met Sayyid Ahmad Shahid in A. D. 1820 and became his disciple. Thereupon he was invested by the Sayyid with *Khilafat* and given the charge of the Patna disciples. In A. D. 1831 when he was touring South India the news of the Balakot disaster was communicated to him. He at once hurried to Patna where he was elected the chief successor of the Sayyid. (cf. 'Abd al-Rahim : *al-Durar al-Manshur fi Tarajim-i-Ahl-i-Sadiqpur, Ilahabad*, A. H. 1345, pp. 114-16 : and W. W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, London, 1871 p. 49 f.)

:Sayyid Ahmad Shahid¹, who asserted the claim of the finality of the schools and maintained that complete adherence to the prescriptions of the school was necessary on the part of every Muslim of "our age". The third view was expressed by Mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbar, another disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid², who professed himself to be a follower of the Hanafī school of law but still adhered to the principle of giving preference to the Prophetic tradition. These views were brought out in three publications by the three persons concerned, which are briefly examined below :—

1 *Mawlana Karamat 'Ali* was born at Mullatola of Jawnpur in U.P., in A.H. 1215, A.D. 1800 (cf. *Mawlana 'Abd al-Batin : Sirat-i-Mawlana Karamat 'Ali Jawnpuri, Ilahabad*, A.H. 1368, p. 9; and *Intaj al-Din Ahmad : Nasab Nama-i-Karamatiyah* (Bengali), B. S. 1356, p. 1. James Wise says, "excited by the preachings of Sayyid Ahmmad, he followed that remarkable man to Calcutta, [circa A.D. 1820], became his disciple and accompanied him to Meccah. On return he proved himself one of the most valuable deputies of Sayyid Ahmad" (cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 27). In A.H. 1250, A.D. 1835, he came to Calcutta, a second time, with the intention of devoting the rest of his life inpreaching pure doctrines of *Islam* to the Muslims of Eastern India. This visit to Bengal continued for 18 years without break (cf. *Mawlana 'Abd al Batin : Sirat-i-Mawlana Karamat 'Ali Jawnpuri, op. cit.*, pp. 44-45 and 88). In course of this visit, he toured almost all the districts of Bengal including Dhaka, Faridpur, Bakarganj and Mymensingh, the zone of *Fara'idi* influence. In A.D. 1853, he paid a short visit to Jawnpur but soon came back to Bengal. He took a second wife at Noakhali district and died at Rangpur on the 2nd *Rabi II*, A.H. 1290, A.D. 1873 (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 97-98).

2 This *Mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbar* was a resident of Calcutta. He was the son of *Jamal Allah* son of *Muhammad Ashraf* (cf. *Mawlawī 'Abd al Jabbar : Jawab-i-Quwwat-al-Iman*, circa. A.D. 1837, p. 2). He is to be identified with one referred to by *Mawlana Karamat 'Ali* as belonging to *naya madhab* or the new school (cf. *Mawlana Karamat 'Ali : Quwwat al Iman*, op. cit., section "*Ruqqa'at-i-'Abd al-Jabbar*" p. 323 f.). He must not, therefore, be confused with the *Fara'idi Khilafah* of the same name.

History of the Fara'idi Movement:

(i) Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Alī called his work *Amal bi'l-Hadith*, *i.e.*, following Prophetic tradition or *ittibā'-i-sunnah*. It is a small but important pamphlet, written in chaste Persian and published sometimes before A.D. 1837¹. In the opening section the author says that so many questions were put to him regarding the propriety of "following Prophetic tradition" (*ittibā'-i-hadīth*) in preference to "following the prescriptions of the school" (*ittibā'-i-fiqh*) and vice versa, that he decided to publish this pamphlet for general information².

In this work the author says that the main purpose of Islam is to make the people to follow the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition. Hence, if a prescription of the school is found to contradict any of the injunctions contained in these two sources, the prescription must be given up, and the injunction be followed. For, in this context there is no scope for *taqlīd* or imitation of the school³. He further opines that if in such a case a Hanafi (*i.e.*, a follower of school) gives up the prescription of his school in order to follow the Prophetic tradition, he proves himself to be a good Hanafi. For, the main object in following the prescriptions of the school is to follow the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition⁴. In any case, the main object is to follow the truth and not the opinions of a person. In his opinion *taqlīd* or imitation of a school is permissible only for those who are unable to decide the right course of action by

1 The textual evidence indicates that this work was published earlier than Mawlana Karamat 'Alī's *Quwwat at-Iman* (See *infra*).

2 *Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Alī : Amal bi'l-Hadith*, p. 1.

3 *Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Alī : Amal bi'l-Hadith*, pp. 3 f., 12, 15 and 16..

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-11.

means of their own knowledge'. But it is not permissible for a person who can decide for himself by his knowledge of the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition².

(ii) Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī called his work Quwwat al-Imān, i.e., the strength of the faith. It is a book of 344 pages written in Urdu and published in A. H. 1253/A. D. 1837. Its main theme being the vindication of the finality of the school, it proved to be a refutation of Mawlawī Wilāyat 'Alī's 'Amal bi'l-Hadith.

In this work, the author maintains that among the two great division of the Muslims, the Shi'ah school has gone astray and the Sunni school is on the right path. The Sunni school, however, consists of only four recognised schools, namely, Hanfī, Shāfi'i, Mālikī and Hanbālī. The finality of these four schools has been decided by the consensus of the opinion of the Muslim community. It is, therefore, necessary that every Muslim follows the prescription of one of them.³

Ijtihad or fresh inquiry, according to Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī, is theoretically possible⁴. The establishment of the four schools, however, has rendered fresh investigation unnecessary; for there is no need of a fifth school⁵. Even if any jurist invent a fifth school, it will conform to one of these four⁶. Hence, such an attempt would be superfluous.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Mawlawī Karamat 'Alī : *Quwwat al-Iman*. Calcutta, A.H. 1253, p. 28.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 192 f.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 39 and 82.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

It is necessary to follow one of the Imāms, i.e., enunciators of the four schools; for, their paths are, in reality, the paths of the companions of the Prophet. In fact, they elicited the prescriptions from the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition and did not invent anything of their own¹. Even if the prescriptions of the school appears to contradict any injunction of the Prophetic tradition the prescriptions must be followed: for, the necessity of the imitation (*taqlīd*) of the Imāms, has been established by the consensus of the opinion of the Muslim community (*ijmā'*). Hence 'giving up the *taqlīd* of the Imām would amount to going out of the fold of Muslim community (*sawād al-a'zam*)².

In one place, he declares that he still adhered to the old school of law (*madhhab*) to which he previously belonged, i.e., Hanafi school of law. "I remained firm", he says, "on my old school and did not give up *taqlīd* on account of the propaganda of the ignorant"³.

(iii) Mawlāwī 'Abd al-Jabbār calls his works *Taqwiyat al-Muslimin fi ittibā'-i-Sunnat-i-Sayyid al-Mursalin*, i.e., strengthening the Muslims in following the tradition of the Prophet. It is written in Urdu and was published in A.H. 1256/A.D. 1840. This work, as the title itself suggests, is a re-assertion of the necessity of giving preference to the Prophetic tradition. Hence, it is a refutation of Mawlāna Karāmat 'Ali's *Quwwat al-Imān*.

It may be noted that earlier to this publication Mawlāwī 'Abd al-Jabbār published a pamphlet entitled *Jawab-i-Quwwat al-Imān*, i.e., a reply to *Quwwat al-Imān*,

1 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 154 and 166.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 292

in which he considered several important points advanced by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī, and refuted them one by one¹.

The subject of the *Taqwiyat al-Muslimin* is more or less the same as that of Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Alī's *Amal bi'l-Hadīth*. Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Alī's work was a statement of policy, in which the leader of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement reiterated that he would pursue the same policy which was bequeathed by the founders of the movement. Mawlawi 'Abd al-Jabbār's work was a justification of that policy, in which he attempted to show that the policy so bequeathed was no other than the policy of Shāh Wali Allāh and Shāh 'Abd al-'Aziz². Thus, Mawlawi 'Abd al-Jabbār's work proved to be complementary to Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Alī's *Amal bi'l-Hadīth*.

In *Taqwiyat al-Muslimin*, 'Abd al-Jabbār says that it is clear from the evidence of the Qur'an³ that "our salvation lies in following the Prophetic tradition to the fullest extent, even if it goes against the customs and usages". Hence, if a follower of the school leaves away the prescription of the *Imam* in order to follow the tradition of the Prophet, he earns the pleasure of the Prophet as well as that of the *imams*; for the *imams* themselves were of the opinion that if any of their views contradicts Prophetic tradition, the latter must be followed⁴.

1 Copy preserved in the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca.

2 Mawlawi 'Abd al-Jabbar : *Taqwiyat al-Muslimin fi Ittiba'-Sunnat-i-Sayyid al-Mursalin*. Calcutta, A.H. 1256, p. 26 f.

3 He cites the following verse of the *Qur'an* : (Say O Muhammad)! "If you really love Allah, follow me, Allah will love you". *Qur'an*, 3:31.

4 *Taqwiyat al-Muslimin*, op. cit., p. 23

Taqlid or imitation of the schools, in his opinion, cannot be a general rule. It may only be allowed as a matter of necessity for the ignorant. He further says that Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz and Shāh Isma'il Shahid regarded *taqlid* as useless and akin to polytheism. It is, therefore, necessary to ascertain that the prescriptions of the school are in conformity with the *Qur'an* and the Prophetic tradition¹.

Mawlāwī 'Abd al-Jabbār claims himself to be a Hanafī. He, however, believes that the truth is not a monopoly of any one achool but pervades the schools of all religious scholars (*muftahids*). Hence, he regards all religious scholors as his leaders. He, therefore, claims himself to be completely impartial in his judgment of their opinions². In spite of this independence of thought, he thinks, he is a rightly guided Hanafi.

Split between Mawlana Karamat 'Ali and Mawlawi Wilayat 'Ali : The above analysis shows that from A. D. 1831 onwards, Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Ali, the leader of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, pursued the policy of giving preference to Prophetic tradition, and even encouraged the followers of the Hanafī school, who formed the bulk of the Muslim population of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, to pay increasing attention to the tradition of the Prophet. Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali on the other hand attached greater importance to the prescriptions of the school. As corollaries of these two standpoints, Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Ali, supported the principle of *ijtihad* or fresh inquiry and Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali supported the principle of *taqlid*. Thus the publication of '*Amal bi'l-Hadīth*' and

1 Cf. *Taqwiyyat al-Muslimin*, op. cit., p. 29.

2 Cf. Mawlawi 'Abd al-Jabbar : *Jawāb-i-Quwwat al-Imān*, circa., A. D. 1837, p. 2.

Quwwat al-Islām about the year A.D. 1837, brought at two opposing tendencies represented by the two leading followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shabīd, to a head, and the split between them became complete.

Thereafter, Mawlānā Karāmat Alī called himself Hanafi and campaigned for the Hanafi school of law. Later on he came to be known as "Ta'aīyuni" and the reform movement led by him as the "Ta'aīyuni movement", especially in Eastern Bengal¹.

Mawlāwī Wilāyat 'Alī maintained a neutral position, and is not known to have identified himself with any particular school of law. After his death (A.D. 1852), his followers came to be known as "Wahhābīs" or "Indian Wahhābīs", especially in the government circle, because of their involvement in a series of State Trials, officially known as Wahhābi Trials, from A.D. 1863 to 1870². They, however, called themselves "Muhammadi"³ an abbreviation of *Tariqah in Muhammadiyah*. But in order to distinguish them from the Ahl-i-Hadīth, who come out of the main body of the movement at a later date and who also called themselves "Muhammadi", the followers of Mawlāwī Wilāyat 'Alī have been referred throughout this study as the Patna school, as Patna was the centre of their activity.

Although Mawlāwī 'Abd al-Jabbār identified himself with the Hanafi school of law, yet his approach to the

1 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 6-7.

2 Cf. W.W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, London, A.D. 1871 p. 84; and Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan : *Selections from Bengal Government Records on Wahhabi Trials*, 1863-1870, Dhaka, 1961, p.1.

3 Cf. Mawlāwī Karamat 'Alī : *Quwwat-al-Imān*. op. cit., p. 135 ff.

Prophetic tradition was, as we have seen above, fundamentally the same as that of Mawlawī Wilāyat 'Alī. Naturally, therefore, he remained within the main body of the movement, i.e., the Patna school.

Split between Patna School and Ahl-Hadīth : In the foregoing analysis of Mawlawī Wilāyat 'Alī's *Amal bi'l-Hadīth* and Mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Taqwiyyat al-Muslimin*, we have noticed that two distinct tendencies were gradually gaining ground among the promoters of the Prophetic tradition, one inclining to the schools of law and the other betraying reluctance to affiliate itself to any school of law. But, although Mawlawī Wilāyat 'Alī did not identify himself to any school of law, yet he recognised the validity of the schools. Likewise, Mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbār firmly attached himself to Prophetic tradition though he also affiliated himself to the Hanafi school. So long as Mawlawī Wilāyat 'Alī was alive (d. 1852), this accommodative spirit saved the trends from a collision.

In course of time the two trends assumed extreme position as one group inclined more and more to *Hanafi* school of law and the other repudiated the propriety of imitation or *taglid* of the school of law. Hence, no longer the split between the two groups could be avoided.

Materials at our disposal do not permit us to fix an exact date to this split. The first important pamphlet namely *Thabut-i Haqiq* (i.e., establishment of the truth), which indicated a complete breach between the two groups, was published in A.H. 1281/A.D. 1864. This

work was written by Sayyid Nadhir Husayn¹, who led the repudiators of the schools of law.

This new school which came out of the Patna school, called itself "Muhammadī" and "Ahl-i-Hadīth" (*i.e.*, the partisans of the tradition of the Prophet). Later on they came to be widely known as Ahl-i-Hadīth and Rāfi Yedāyn, the last name because of their practice of frequently raising hands in course of prayer. Their opponents often called them *la Madhhabi* (*i.e.*, one who does not belong to any of the recognised *sunni* school of law). Although the term "*la madhhab*" reflected their actual position, it was applied to them by way of reproach. In the present study they are referred to as Ahl-i-Hadīth.

Relations of the Farā'idi with Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyahits Successor Movements. The influence of Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah affected Bengal in four phases. The first phase began with the visit of Sayyid Ahmad Shhid and Shah Ismā'il Shhahid to Calcutta in A.D. 1820, and lasted till 1831. The second phase was through Patna school, the third phase through *Ta'aīyuni* and the fourth phase through Ahl-i-Hadīth. The protagonists of the above phases of Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah, in course of propagation of their doctrines in Eastern Bengal, came into contact with the Farā'idis and developed friendly or hostile relations with them. As the Farā'idis had a different type of relation with them, it is desirable that

1 Sayyid Nadhir Husayn was born at Balthawa in the Munghyr district of Bihar, in A.D. 1805. About A.D. 1842, he established a religious seminary at Delhi and taught Prophetic tradition there till his death in A.D. 1902 (*cf.* Muhammad Ishaque : *India's Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature* (being a doctoral thesis approved by the University of Dhaka in 1947). Dhaka University Publication, 1955, pp. 184-85.

their relations with each of these groups be considered separately.

(i) *Relations of the Fara'idis with Tariqah-i Muhammadiyah*
(A.D. 1820 to 1831)

The Ṭarīqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement was started at Delhi about A.D. 1818. In A.D. 1820, the founders of the movement paid a visit to Calcutta, where, according to Hunter, "the masses flocked around" Sayyid Ahmad Shahid in such numbers that he was unable even to go through the formal ceremony of initiation i.e., by separately clasping the hand of every person desirous of becoming his disciple. "Unfolding his turban, therefore, he declared that all who touched any part of its ample length became his disciple"¹. Next year, on his way to Makkah he visited Calcutta again and stayed there for a period of three months². According to tradition current in the then East Pakistan, many people came thither to meet him from different districts of Bengal.

It may be noted that while coming to Calcutta for the first time in A. D. 1820, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid halted at Patna, where, according to Hunter, the number of his disciples had "so swelled" as to "require a regular system of government". Hence, he appointed Mawlawī Wilāyat 'Alī of Patna his deputy or khalifah and left the charge of the Patna disciples to his care³ before he left Calcutta. Evidently, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* evolved a definite policy with regard to the organisation of the Patna disciples. Materials as our disposal, however, do

1 W. W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, op. cit., p., 13.

2 Cf. *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 563.

3 W. W. Hunter: *Our Indian Musalmans*, op. cit., p 13.

not suggest that a similar Bengal policy was evolved at this early stage either by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid or by his Bengali followers¹.

The amazing success and popularity gained by *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* at the cosmopolitan city of Calcutta however, was bound to overflow in course of time. Little wonder, therefore, that about A. D. 1827, it took the shape of a mass movement in the rural society of West Bengal at the hands of Titu Mir. This first upsurge of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement in Bengal was short-lived and remained confined to the districts of 24 Parganahs and Nadia. As such it formed somewhat a counterpart of the *Fara'idi* movement in West Bengal.

Titu Mir's Programme or Religious Reform : It is generally agreed that Titu Mir preached reformed doctrines of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. It is, however, not known for certain whether the Sayyid invested him with *Khilafat* or commissioned him to propagate the reforms of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* though the local tradition of a legendary nature would have us believe that he was appointed a *Khalifah* by the Sayyid². All we know is that Titu Mir became a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid at Makkah about A.D. 1822³, and on his native district of 24 Parganahs about A.D. 1827, he began to preach pure doctrines of Islam. For this commendable work, he

1 It may be noted that some writers believe that during his stay Sayyid Ahmad Shahid established a well-knit organisation there; but source of information has not been mentioned by any one of them (see *Masik Mohammadi*, Bengali monthly, Dacca, Magh, B.S. 1360 p. 260).

2 See 'Abd al-Gafur Siddiqi, "Titu Mir" in *Masik Muhammadi op cit* B.S. 1960. p. 260 f.

3 W.W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, *op cit...*, p. 45

received a stipend from a member of the Royal Family of Delhi, who had became his patron since A.D. 1821¹.

Biharilal Sarker the Bengali biographer of Titu Mir, says that one Mawlawi, Muhammad Husayn of district of Pabna was appointed a Khalifah by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. In his *sanad* of Khalifat, which was deciphered by Biharilal Sarker, the Sayyid impressed upon Muhammad Husayn the necessity of enforcing two fundamental items of programme, *viz.*, (i) the attributes of God must not be applied to human beings, and (ii) no rite or ceremony (excepting those which are approved by the *Qur'an* and Prophetic tradition) be observed². According to Biharilal Sarker Titu Mir enforced above pattern of reforms in West Bengal³.

According to the same authority, the above mentioned principles were further elaborated in the *sanad*. In the first place, it was pointed out that the angel, spirit, demon, *Pir*, teacher, saint or prophet has no power of their own to bestow benefit or to inflict injury on anybody; none of them, therefore, be propitiated or worshipped. Secondly, no (un Islamic) rite or ceremony be observed on the occasions of marriage and death; hence, decoration of tomb, raising of mausoleum, preparation of *ta'ziah* (*i.e.*, the effigy of Imam Husayn's tomb) on the occasion of Muharram, and various *fatiyahs* (*i.e.*, rites for the remembrance of dead relatives), be

1 Mallick : *British Policy*, p. 77, cf. Bengal Judicial Criminal consultations, 3 April, 1831 Letter from the Magistrate of Baraset to the Commissioner of the Circuit, 14 Division, dated 24 November, 1831 Para, 4 India Office Library.)

2 Biharilal Sarker : *Titu Mir* (Bengali), Calcutta, B.S. 1304, 11
see also W.W. Hunter : Indian Musalmans, p. 54 f.

3 Biharilal Sarker : *Titu Mir*, p. 11.

purged¹. According to Biharilal Sarker, the above programme was also the characteristic of Titu Mir's movement².

In addition to the above mentioned items, Titu Mir directed his followers to grow beards and to wear *dhuti* (the national dress of the Hindus which was commonly used by the Muslims of Bengal until recently) without passing one end between the legs³. Furthermore, he is said to have asked his followers to keep away from the unreformed Muslims and permitted interdining only amongst his followers themselves⁴.

If this last characteristic of Titu Mir's programme of reform, namely imposition of restriction on interdining, as reported by Colvin, is true, it must have led his followers to form into a distinct and exclusive social group resembling the Hindu caste, and as a consequence, it may have restricted the number of his followers⁵. Being the promoter of an Islamic revivalism, Titu Mir is not, however, expected to follow such a course. There have been many *sufi* and puritan 'ulama' (theologians) who would not accept food or present offered by a person who earned his livelihood by foul means, such as through cheating, usury or bribery. But they did

1 Ibid., p. 11

2 Ibid.

3 This practice was also characteristic of the *Fara'idis* (see *infra.*, chapter vi).

4 Cf. *Colvin to Barwell*. 8 March, 1832, para. 6, (Board's) Collection No. 54222), p. 43 : quoted by Dr. Mallick in his *British Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

5 This position appears to have been accepted by Dr. Mallick, see his *British Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 77. For our views which are slightly different, see below.

not restrain people of such doubtful integrity, from dining with them or even from becoming their guests. Even now-a-days instances of this nature are not lacking in the Muslim society of Bengal. This kind of practice is also found amongst the *Fara'idi khalifahs*. Being a stranger to the institutions of *Islam*, Colvin was probably unable to differentiate between a fanatic restriction to interdining and a pious attachment to "lawful food and earnings" (*halal : uzi*).

It will be seen later that the reform programme enforced by *Haji Shar'iat Aliyah* was almost similar to the one described above¹. This similarity of programme led Revenshaw, the Wahhabī prosecutor (*circa* A.D. 1863-1870), to identify the *Fara'idi* movement with those of Titu Mir and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and also Dr. Mallick to call the movement of Titu Mir as *Fara'idi*². Materials at our disposal, however, suggest that these notions are far from the truth.³

In the first place, we have just seen that Titu Mir's programme of religious reform was an extension of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* to rural Bengal. Hence, it was in the tradition of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and *Shah Wali Allah*. The inspiration of *Haji Shar'iat Aliyah*, on the other hand, was drawn from Arabia and had no connection with the religious development in Delhi.

Secondly, there is no evidence of any contact between *Haji Shar'iat Allah* and Titu Mir or between the

1. See *infra.*, chapter iii, p. 7 ff.

2. Cf. Dr Mallick : *British Policy, op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

3. For our point of view see "The Struggle of Titu Mir : a re-examination", *J.A.S.P.*, vol. in, 1959, pp. 113-33 in which we have also utilised indigenous sources.

two movements led by them. Tradition current in the family of Hājī Shari'at Allāh, as will be seen later, indicates that each of them entertained friendly attitude to the other, and that, Dudu Miyān (son of Hājī Shari'at Allāh) paid a visit to Titu Mir while on his way to Makkah, when the former was only 12 years old (*circa.*, A.D. 1830-1831)¹. There is a likelihood that Dudu Miyān was influenced by the socio-economic aspect of Titu Mir's movement. But, when that influence began to exert on the Farā'idi movement (from *circa*, A.D. 1840) Titu Mir's movement had already died out.

Thirdly, it has been pointed out by Revenshaw that Titu Mir and Hājī Shari'at Allāh were the followers of Hanafi school of law.² This is quite natural; for, in the first place, almcst all Muslims of rural Bengal have always been Hanafi; secondly, it will be seen that the Hājī's teacher and guide Tāhir Sombal was a Hanafi³, and thirdly, many of the leading disciples of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, such as Mawlawi 'Abd al-Hayy and Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali were Hanafis. Even the Sayyid himself had good deal of inclination towards the Hanafi school of law⁴. This similarity, therefore, does not prove their identity.

Fourthly, we have seen earlier that one of the real criterion of difference between the Farā'idi and Ṭarīqah-i-Muhammadiyah lay in their attitude to the legality of holding congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Id*.

1 See *infra.*, chapter iv, p. 24.

2 Cf. *Selection from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, vol. XLII : *Trial of Ahmadullah*, p. 127.

3 See *infra.*, chapter iii, p. 4 ff.

4 See *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957; PP. 569-70.

in Bengal under the British rule¹. As Titu Mir and his followers unlike the Fara'idis held fast to these prayers, which is also pointed out by Dr. Mallick², we find the real criterion of their difference on this doctrinal point. It will also be seen later that this particular point proved to be the distinguishing mark between the Fara'idis and the followers of Mawlānā Karāmat' Ali³.

A concrete example of their difference is found in the life and career of Munshi Faid al-Din Mukhtar, originally a resident of the district of Jessorā, who became a follower of Titu Mir at Calcutta. In his later life he immigrated to Faridpur distract and married in an eminent Fara'idi family. During the life time of Dudu Miyān, he acted as the former's legal attorney, and after Dudu Miyān's death, he was appointed one of the guardians of Dudu Miyān's son. He, however, did not become a convert to the Fara'idi doctrines but remained a faithful follower of Titu Mir till his death.⁴

Nevertheless, there were certain striking similarities between the life and career of Titu Mir and Hāji Shari'at Allāh, which may not be overlooked. In the first place. Titu Mir was born of an obscure family⁵ as was the case of Hāji Shariat Aliāh⁶. Both of them therefore, came from the lower strata of the Muslim society of Bengal. Secondly, almost all their supporters came from the masses of the people. Thirdly, both the movements

1 See *supra*.

2 See Mallick : *British Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 91, foot note 1,

3 See *infra*., chapter vi p. 67 ff. and chapter viii, p. 98 ff.

4 See *infra*. Appendix "G", p. 139.

5 Cf. W. W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, *op. cit.*, p. 45

6 See *infra*., chapter iii, P. 1 ff.

spread most extensively in those places where the Hindu zamindars held sway over the Muslim peasantry.

Moreover in course of his propagation of the puritan doctrines of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Titu Mir came into conflict with the Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters of 24 Parganahs in A. D. 1830. For, the growing sense of equality and unity of his followers, alarmed the Hindu zamindars, especially as his movement showed every symptom of going against their vested interest on account of its popularity among the Muslim peasantry. On the other hand, a section of the conservative Muslims detested his puritanism which assailed their time-honoured customs and prejudices; but they themselves being unable to check the growth of the new movement lodged complaints to the Hindu zamindars against Titu Mir and his followers. This gave the zamindars the opportunity they sought, and Ram Narayan (zamindar) of Taragonia), Gaur Prasad Chowdhury (zamindar of Nagarpur), and Krishna Dev Ray (zamindar of Purwa or Punrah) took concerted step to crush the movement in the bud. They imposed a "beard-tax" at the Rate of Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ per head on the followers of Titu Mir. This heavy tax was actually realised at Purwa, but the agents of the zamindars met with resistance at Safdarpur, where the peasantry challenged the right of the zamindars to levy such illegal cesses which went against the teachings of Islām. In retaliation, Krishna Dev Ray attacked the Muslim settlement of Safdarpur in A. D. 1830, with a large band of clubmen (lāthiyāl), looted the village and burned down several houses including a mosque. The peasantry tried their best to secure justice against these oppressions and extortions from the Police and the legal courts, but all in vain. At last, in A. D. 1831, the peasantry rose

in a body, entered the market-place of Purwa, i.e., in the village of Krishna Dev Ray, slaughtered a cow and with its blood and carcases defiled a Hindu temple. In this process, Titu Mir's movement turned itself into a socio-economic struggle of the Muslim peasantry against the Hindu zamindars in which the European indigo planters combined their forces with their natural allies, the zamindars. The struggle that followed soon flared up into large scale affrays, in which Titu Mir won a clear victory over both the zamindars and indigo planters. But his enemies being in close touch with the English officers succeeded in convincing them that Titu Mir was a rebel against the British government. Thereupon two Police expeditions were sent to apprehend Titu Mir and his Party which were beaten back. Finally Titu Mir and his followers were crushed by a military expedition from Calcutta on the 19th November, 1831¹.

It will be seen later that the Fara'idi movement also followed a similar pattern. In A.D. 1831, it came into conflict with the conservative Muslim society and through it with the Hindu *zamindars* of Dacca. From A.D. 1838 onwards it came into violent conflict with the Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters on account of its policy of upholding the rights of the Muslim peasantry. This eventually gave it a socio-economic bias, and it became most popular in this socio-economic phase².

This similarity in the growth and development of the two movements indicates that the reform movements of

1 For details see "The struggle of Titu Mir, a re-examination" *J.A.S.P.*, vol. iv, 1959, pp. 113-33

2. See *infra.*, chapters iii and iv

Haji Shariat Allah and Titu Mir were called into being by similar social, economic and religious crises, which the Muslims of Bengal, especially the lower classes, were facing as a result of political and administrative changes wrought by British during their rule of over half a century. Thus, it may be fairly concluded that the identification of the Fara'idi movement with that of Titu Mir is not justified.

(ii) *Relations between the Faraidi and the Patna School :* The annihilation of Titu Mir and his followers in A.D. 1831 did not, however, remove the cause of discontent among the peasantry. The spirit of reformation and of revolt against oppression, which he stood for, undoubtedly survived. In his violent death, he became even more known than in his life time, and his martyrdom became symbolic of his ideals and a lasting source of inspiration to the down-trodden peasantry of Bengal in their subsequent struggle against the zamindars and indigo planters. The thread of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's influence in rural Bengal, which was cut off by Titu Mir's tragic death, was soon taken up by an infinitely superior successor of him, Mawlawi Ināyat Ali of Patna.

Considering the death of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid at Balakot and of Titu Mir at Narkelbaria in A.D 1831 Hunter observes that the end of the reformers appeared to have come. "On the Punjab frontier their forces had been scattered and their leader slain. The insurrection in Lower Bengal had met with a similar fate." But the Khalifahs whom the Sayyid appointed at Patna (*i.e.*, Mawlawi Wilāyat 'Ali and Mawlawi Ināyat Ali came, to the rescue"¹. Their "missionary Zeal" and "immense

1 W.W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, London 1871. P. 47.

pecuniary resource" raised the sacred banner again and again from the dust¹. When the news of Balacot disaster reached Mawlawi Wilayat 'Ali (while he was in South India), he hurried to Patna where he was elected the chief leader of *Tariqha-i-Muhammadiyah*. On his own part, he chose a few picked persons, made them his *Khalifah* and sent them to different directions. It was in this process that Mawlawi Ināyat 'Ali came to Bengal².

The exact date of Mawlawi 'Ināyat 'Ali's arrival in Bengal is not known. According to his family records, it took place in A.D. 1831 or 1832³. On his arrival, he made a survey of the whole field in consultation with the Bengali followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and soon realised that the Muslims of rural Bengal, who were plunged in ignorance and superstition, needed his greater attention than those of the towns and cities. He, therefore, made for the interior of the province and toured one village after another, preaching without rest the pure doctrines of Islām⁴. About A.D. 1840, he even took the bold step of removing his headquarters to

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

2 Cf. Abd al-Rahim: *al Durrar al-Manahur fi Tarajim-i-Ahl-i Sadiqpur*, Ilahabad, A.D. 1345. p.p. 133-34. It may be noted that the author of the above work belongs to the family of Mawlawi Wilayat Ali and Mawlawi 'Inayat 'Ali, which is popularly known as the "Sadicpur Family". The author claims that he has compiled this work on the basis of family records. We accept this source in so far as corroboration is found in other sources.

3 *Ibid.* The author categorically says that *Mawlawi 'Inayat. Ali* stayed for 7 years in Bengal during this first visit and thereafter proceeded to the principality of Kaghan where we find him in A. D. 1838. Thus, we may calculate that he came to Bengal in A. D. 1831 or in the beginning of 1832,

4 *Ibid.* p. 133.

Hakimpur, a village in the district of Jessore, where he lived with his family for 3 or 4 years¹.

It is also evident from the Government Records relating to five State Trials. viz., (a) Ambala Trial of 1864, (b) Patna Trial of 1865, (c) Maldah Trial of 1870, (d) Rajmahal Trial of 1870 and (e) The Great Wahhabî Trials of 1870-1871, that the endeavours of Mawlawi 'Ināyat 'Ali and his agents, from A.D. 1830 to 1870, had far-reaching effects on the Muslims of Bengal². The mode of the Sayyid's preachings through passionate appeal to the mass of the people, not only to reform their religious life but also for active participation in a political venture, had introduced a new dynamic force in Muslim society, namely a religio-political consciousness of the masses. Mawlawi 'Ināyat 'Ali's strategy in Bengal was no exception. By uniting the masses into a well knit organisation and by preaching the doctrine of jihād or holy war against the usurpers of Muslim dominion, he and his followers succeeded in bringing about a religious revolution in the Muslim society of rural Bengal. Thus, Mawlawi 'Ināyat 'Ali's arrival in Bengal about A.D. 1832, not only revitalised Titu Mir's effort but also brought the central wave of Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah into the remotest villages of the province.

Zone of its Influence and Contact with the Fara'idi: The establishment of the headquarters of Mawlawi 'Ināyat

1 *Ibid.*, also this is widely known in East Pakistan.

2 See W. W. Hunter: *Our Indian Musalmans*, op. cit., p 84 f.; Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan: *Selections from Bengal Government Records on Wahhabî Trials 1863-1870*, Dhaka, 1961, p. 1 ff; *Pamphlet on India, the Great Wahhabî Case being a full report of the proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashmadad Khan*, Calcutta, 1870; and Lewis A. Mendes: *Report of the Proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashmadad Khan*, Calcutta, 1871.

'Ali at JESSORE, bordering on the Farā'idi district of of Faridpur, must have brought the followers of the Patna school and the Farā'idis into close contact. Hunter says that Mawlawi Yahyā 'Ali, an eminent leader of the Patna school, had "amalgamated the Farā'idis of Lower Bengal with the Wahhābis of Northern India" about A.D. 1843. He further states that the Farā'idis and the followers of the Patna school (*i.e.*, the so-called Wahhābis) were "found side by side alike among the dead on the field of battle and in the dock of the Courts of Justice" from about A.D. 1858 to 1878¹. We have, however, seen that the Farā'idis and the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadiyah had doctrinal differences, and Patna school being a continuation of the latter, amalgamation of the two movements is beside the question, nor has it any historical basis as will be seen in the following chapters. Circumstantial evidences, however, suggest that common disapproval of the British occupation of this subcontinent, had fostered cordial relations amongst the followers of the two movements.

In the first place tradition current among the Farā'idis claims that the followers of Dudu Miyān contributed generously to the jihād fund opened by him for the help of the fighters of the Patna school at the North-West Frontier Camp. Secondly, in one document relating to the Maldah Trial of A.D. 1870, mention has been made of two Farā'idi leaders visiting the town of Maldah which was undoubtedly a settlement of the followers of the Patna school. They stayed there for a few days and preached their doctrines in large gatherings without

1 W.W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, op., cit., p. 100.

any let or hindrance¹. If they visited a *Ta'ayuni* settlement, such peaceful propagation of Fara'idi doctrines would not have been possible². Thirdly, although the Faraidis dominated the eastern portion of the district of Jessore, and the followers of the Patna school in the western portion, there is no evidence of their ever coming into conflict : rather, this direct contact between the two movements appears to have checked the progress of the Fara'idi movement to the west and that of the Patna school to the east.

On the whole, evidences gathered from government documents suggest that the northern and western districts of Bengal, namely Dinajpur, Maldah, Rajshahi, Murshidabad, Nadiya, Burdwan, Jessore, Calcutta and 24 Parganahs, had come under the strong influence of the Patna school. The movement was apparently strongest in those tracts which were traversed by the rivers Ganges and Bhagirathi³. Three doctrinal works, dealing with the life and character of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Shah Isma'il Shahid in Bengali and Urdu, published from Dacca about A.D. 1863⁴, strongly suggest that the doctrine of jihād or holy war, preached by them, had tremendous appeal in Eastern Bengal, and

1 See our *Selections from Bengal Government Records, op. cit.*, pp. 300-301.

2 See *infra.*, chapter vii for the intensity of *Ta'ayuni* opposition to the *Faraidi* movement.

3 Cf. *Selections from Bengal Government Records, op. cit.*, p. 8

4 These works are (i) *Tusser Moradiya* (probably *taysir* or *tassir al-muradiyah*, i.e., an exposition of the ideals), published in Urdu language ; (ii) a collection of *Eatawa* or legal decisions on the necessity of waging *Jihad* or holy war, compiled and published by Haji Badr al-Din in Bengali verse ; and (iii) *Tutwa* (probably *tatva* i.e. subtle principles), jointly composed by Haji Jan Rahman

that the influence of Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah had swept over this region. But curiously enough the influence of Patna school made no noticeable headway there.

A close examination of the abstract of these works (supplied by these Records¹), reveals that there existed a nascent conflict between the beliefs of the credulous masses and that of the elite with regard to the character of leadership provided by the Sayyid. Being prone to believe in miracles, the masses regarded the Sayyid as the *Mahdi* (*i.e.*, the last spiritual guide much awaited for, especially by the *Shi'ahs*), who had miraculously disappeared rather than died (at the battle of Balakot in A.D. 1831), but only to reappear on a more opportune time in order to rescue the Muslims from the humiliation of the English rule through *jihād*. On the other hand special care has been taken in these works to counteract this superstition. They describe graphically the circumstances under which Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Shaheed Ismail Shahid were killed by the Sikhs bewail the then sorrowful plight of the Muslims and express the hope that their condition would improve by the grace of God. *Jihād* was deemed obligatory on every Muslim, and besides *jihād* (*i.e.*, holy war) and *hijrat* (*i.e.*, emigration from a country ruled by the infidels to the countries ruled by the Muslims), no other alternative was recognised. Even they assert that whosoever rejects *jihād* and *hijrat* was an enemy of God.

The boldness of the elite in accepting the fact of the Sayyid's death, may have been the result of the disco-

and Haji Badr al-Din in Bengali verse (see *ibid.*, pp. 278 and 301).

1 *Ibid.*

very of a Bengali disciple of the Sayyid, who, according to Hunter, travelled 1800 miles with one thousand colleagues to inquire about the Sayyid's death on the spot. They found three "goat-skins stuffed with grass" which were made to resemble the appearance of human beings with the help of some pieces of wood and hair. These stuffed figures, preserved by one Mullah Qādir in a mountain cave, were represented as the Sayyid and his companions. This was, it is said, made the ground for many miraculous stories around the Balakot disaster by the followers of the Patna school¹. The reluctance of the elite of Eastern Bengal to accept the miraculous stories in this respect may, therefore, have been one of the main reasons for the retarded progress of the influence of Patna school in that region.

A second reason for the retardation of its influence in Eastern Bengal may be found in the reluctance of the Patna school to come into conflict with Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī of Jawnpur, who had concentrated his efforts for reform largely in Eastern Bengal². A third reason might have lain in the good relations which existed between the Patna school and the Farā'idi. Besides, extensive Farā'idi influence in the area lying north to south from Mymensingh to Bakarganj, had also considerably blocked the expansion of the Patna school to Eastern Bengal and Assam³, as the progress of the Farā'idi movement to the western Jessore was checked by the powerful influence of the Patna school there.

Relations between the Farā'idi and the Ta'aifyuni: The Ta'aifyuni movement was an off-shoot of the Ṭariqah-i-

1 Cf. W. W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

2 See *infra*.

3 See *infra*., chapter ix.

Muhammadiyah, which was led by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī. The term "ta'aiyuni" is derived from the Arabic word "ta'aiyun", which means "to identify". Hence the term "ta'aiyuni" implies a person who identifies himself with a particular trend. We have seen earlier that the split between Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī and the main body of the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah led by Mawlāwī Wilāyat 'Alī, was effected by the former's insistence on the principle of taqlid or imitation of the school of law (*madhab*) in this context, the term "ta'aiyuni", therefore, implied a person who definitely identified himself, with a particular school of law or *madhab*. The fact that Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī rebuked the followers of Mawlāwī Wilāyat 'Alī and the later Ahl-i-Hadīth as *lā-madhabī* (*i.e.*, one who does not belong to any school or *madhab*), corroborates the above interpretation. Hence, James Wise's contention that the term "ta'aiyuni" means "establishing or manifesting"², does not fit into the context.

The Ta'aiyuni movement was also known as Rāhi³, a term derived from the Persian "rah" which means "a path". The term, as we have seen above, was used by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid to mean tariqah (which is its Arabic equivalent) in *Sirāt-al-Mustaqim*. Probably, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī indicated by the term "Rāhi", the two paths, *i.e.*, *rah-i-nabuwat* and *rah-i-wilāyat*, described by the Sayyid⁴.

Like other reformists, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī also opposed superstitious beliefs and un-Islamic innova-

1 Cf. Mawlāwī Karamat Ali : *Quwwat al-Imāu*, op cit., pp. 197, 203 and 208 and *Hujjat-i-Qati*, Calcutta, A. H. 1344, pp. 94-97.

2 James Wise: *Eastern Bengal*, p. 7.

3 *Ibid.*

4 See *supra*.

tions. In one of his pamphlets, he states that he found the Muslims of Eastern India plunged so much in superstitious beliefs, customs and ceremonies that he became apprehensive of Divine retribution. According to him, this was one of the reasons why he dedicated his life to the propagation of true doctrines of Islam amongst the Muslims of Bengal¹. He mentions numerous un-Islamic innovations which were practised in different parts of Bengal. He especially condemned music, dance, raising of *ta'ziah* (*i.e.*, the effigy of Husayn's tomb) on the occasion of Muharram, the rite of '*urs*' (*i.e.*, death anniversary of the Pirs) and various types of *fatiḥah* in remembrance of the dead relatives. He, however, approved *fatiḥah* provided it was observed in a modified form².

Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī came to Bengal in A.D. 1835 and spent the rest of his life (till A.D. 1873) mostly in Bengal. We have seen earlier that the Patna school was co-existing peacefully with the Fara'idiś of Bengal, and by his acceptance of the *taqlid* or imitation of the Hanafī school of law, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī might have come even nearer to the Fara'idi point of view. But, contrary to this expectation, he denounced the Fara'idiś for having suspended the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Id*, and the followers of the Patna school for their hesitation to identify with one of the four recognised *sunni* schools of law. He called the former the *khārijis* of Bengal³ and the latter *lā-madhhab*⁴, and identified

1 *Mawlawi Karamat 'All : Mukashifat-i-Ranmat.*, Calcutta, A. H. 1344, p. 12 f.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali *Hujjat-i-Qati*', *op. cit.*, pp. 94-97.

4 *Ibid.*

both of them with the Wahhābis of Arabia¹.

The vehement attack of Mawlānā Karāmat Ali on the followers of Patna school and the Fara'idis, however, far from uniting them into a common front against him, set them even further apart from one another. For, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali inaugurated an era of debate amongst the muslims of Bengal in the field of religion, and succeeded in organising an intense type of propaganda which laid more emphasis on religious differences among different groups rather than on the similarities and agreement.

The Fara'idis, being followers of the school of Hanafi law, believed in the finality of the schools and the propriety of taqīd². On these points, they had, therefore, fundamental differences with the Patna school, which on principle rejected taqlīd and campaigned for the revivification of ijtihād, and called upon the people to follow Prophetic tradition in preference to the prescription of the schools of law³. Moreover, the followers of the Patna School differed with the Fara'idis in holding congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id*' which in the opinion of the latter were not permissible in Bengal under the British regime⁴.

Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali stream-lined his attack on the Fara'idis by denouncing their practice of suspending the prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id*'⁵. In this the Patna school

1 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Qawl al-Thabi*, Calcutta, A.H. 1344, p. 4.

2 See *supra*.

3 See *supra*.

4 See *infra*, chapter vi, p. 72 ff.

5 See *infra*, chapter vii.

agreed with him. But he hit the followers of Patna school mainly for their deviation from the taqlid of one of the four recognised schools of law¹. On this latter point, the Fara'idiis approved of his arguments. Thus, there ensued a triangular fight in the field of Islamic revivalism of Bengal which to some of the followers of the traditional customs, appeared like breaking of woeful time rather than reformation².

The rigidity with which all parties argued their case soon gave rise to intense bitterness. When the Ahl-i-Hadith severed its connection with the Patna School about the middle of the nineteenth century and extended their movement to Bengal, they also posed themselves to be a rival group against the rest. The natural result was the increase of tension. Thus, as Fadl Husayn says, "the controversy did not remain confined to a few controversialists or to their polemics", but debate (Munāzirah) led to and altercation (Munāqashah) and altercation led to mutual friction (Mujādilah) and so on and so forth³.

Little wonder, therefore, that during the later half of the nineteenth century the religious scene of Bengal was dominated by a type of public (debate between rival groups, popularly known as bāhāth). Such bāhāth

1 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Quwwat al-Iman*, op. cit., pp. 135 ff., 145 ff., 149 ff., 154 and 168.

2 Cf. Mawlawi 'Abd al-'Ali: *Shaifat al-A'mal wa Mir'at al-Ahwāl* (written circa., A.D. 1885), p. 40 ff.

3 Cf. Fadl Husayn: *al-Hayat Ba'd al-Mamat*, p. 308, quoted by Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari in his unpublished Ph. D. thesis, 'A comparative study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines and Contemporary Reform Movements in Indian Islam' (Oxford University, 1953), p. 158.

were held several times between the Fara'idis and the Ta'ayunis, which will be considered in a separate chapter¹.

Relations between the Fara'idis and Ahl-Hadith : The Ahl-i-Hadith or partisans of Prophetic tradition, were those who repudiated the property of taqlid or imitation of any particular school exclusively. They assert the need for following the traditions of the Prophet from original sources through ijtihād or fresh investigation regarding the rules provided by them. In government records and gazetteers, they are generally called Rafi' Yadayn because of their peculiarity of frequently raising hands to the ears in course of changing posture in prayer. They are found scattered all over Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

During the later half of the nineteenth century their traces are found in the Farāidi districts of Faridpur and Bakarganj. But, probably, due to the intellectual character of its doctrines the Ahl-i-Hadith never succeeded in assuming the form of a mass movement in rural Bengal. Moreover, although the Fara'idis are followers of the Hanafi school of law, they do not oppose the idea of following Prophetic tradition. Hence, the Ahl-i-Hadith does not appear to have come into direct conflict with the Fara'idi. Only in one Fara'idi fatwā or legal decision, we come across a reference to the Ahl-i-Hadith in which the Fara'idi theologians detested their practice of holding the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id* in the villages of Bengal². On the whole, the Fara'idis

1 See *infra.*, chapter vii.

2 See *infra.*, chapter vi, p. 72 ff.

and Ahl-i-Hadith appear to have been largely indifferent to each other.

SECTION B
Local Practices

In the late nineteenth century James Wise classified the Muslims of Bengal into four religious groups, *viz.*, Sābiqī, Fara'idi, Ta'aiyuni and Ahl-i Hadīth (or Rāfi'ī Yādyn), and states that the traits of the old society survived in the practice of the Sābiqī alone¹. The term "Sābiqī" is derived from the Arabic word "sabiq" the nominative case of *sabiq*, which means "gone before". A Sābiqī is, therefore, one who follows the customs of the ancestors or those who have gone before. According to wise, the Sābiqī group consisted of the majority of the landlords and "with few exceptions, the descendants of the old sunni families"². He characterises them as "the conservatives" representing "the debased Hinduised religion peculiar to Muhammadan India". He further says that the Sābiqī social order was the oldest and the most corrupt which until late represented the dominant State religion. "By a study of [its?] heresies and superstition", he says, "we acquir a truer estimate" of the Muhammadan faith in Bengal, when the revival first dawned upon the people³. In A.D. 1818, Hāji Shari'at Allāh considered the Muslim society of

1 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 6-7.

2 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 6-7 it may also be noted that the bulk of the Muslim population of Eastern Bengal were Sunnis as Wise himself says, "the Muhammadan population of Eastern Bengal has always been Sunni" (*ibid.*, p. 21).

3 *Ibid.*, p. 7

Bengal so corrupt and un Islamic that he made *tawah* or penitence, the first principle of his reform programme¹. About A.D. 1835, Mawlānā Karāmat Ali of Jawnpur, found the Muslim masses of Eastern India so much plunged in superstitious beliefs and practices that he became apprehensive of Divine retribution². Even as late as A.H. 1289/A.D.-1872 he witnessed much more "pauperism, lethargy and negligence" in the religious behaviour of the Muslims of Southern Bengal than in any other Muslim land³.

The Fara'idi Patna school, *Ta'aīyuni* and Ahl-i-Hadith movements, which represent the Islamic revivalism of the nineteenth century in this subcontinent, aimed at reforming the old socio-religious order by purging it of un-Islamic element. It is, therefore, worthwhile to examine those popular institutions which were attached to the old order, and which the revivalists desired to abolish. The Sābiqi or the old order, however, represented a composite culture in which various strains of local and foreign traditions were fused. The foreign traditions were brought to Bengal by Muslim immigrants from the West (*i.e.*, Central Asia, Arabia, Persia and northern India), or developed locally by them. The local customs consisted of various mystic cults, customs and ceremonies which apparently represented a survival of pre-Islamic practices or blending of Muslim influence with that of the Hindu and Buddhist neighbours. The former were imported through Northern India and both in form and procedure of observation conformed to the North Indian pattern. But the latter, as can be well imagined,

1 See *infra.*, chapter vi, p.61

2 Cf. Mawlavi Karamat 'Ali : *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat*, p. 3.

3 *Ibid.*

were peculiar to Bengal or Eastern India. The main features of this "popular religion" may be considered under following heads :

- (i) Pirism.
- (ii) Mystic Cults, Peculiar to Bengal.
- (iii) Cults, Rites and Ceremonies introduced by the Immigrants.
- (iv) Shi'ah influence on the Sunni Society of Bengal,
- (v) Survival of Local Customs.

(i) *Pirism* : The Persian word 'pir' means "old", and as such the phrase "pir mard" is understood in Persian and Urdu languages to mean "an old man". The term "pir" is, however, especially used in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent to denote "a mystic guide" i.e., *ṣūfi* (or mystic) who initiates disciple in mystic orders. Hence, it is generally understood in contradistinction to the term "murid", which means "a desirous person", i.e., a disciple. In Bengali language, the term "pir" is exclusively used in this mystic sense and has no other meaning than "the mystic guide". The term "pir" as used in Bengali, is, therefore, equivalent to the mystic terms "*Shaykh*", and "*Ustād*" used in different parts of the Muslim world¹.

In the above sense, pirism can be equated with sufism. A distinction has to be made, however, between the connotation of the terms "pir" and "*ṣūfi*", especially as they are used the in Bengal. For, a *ṣūfi* is a person who practises the science of mysticism ('ilm-i-taṣawwuf); but a pir is a person who besides being a *ṣūfi*, initiates disciple into mystic orders. In popular conversation, this distinction is almost exclusively maintained in Ben-

1 Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. x, p. 40.

gal. All pirs are, therefore, ṣūfīs, but all ṣūfī may not be pirs. The significance of this distinction lies in the emphasis on the science of mysticism or taṣawwuf in sufism and on the person of the pir in pirism. Hence, in the early tradition of sufism, we observe that successors of a mystic are chosen on the basis of merit alone¹: whereas, pirism in Bengal and elsewhere in this subcontinent tends to be hereditary.

According to the analysis of K. M. Ashraf, a class of Muslims in the pre-Mughal society of Northern India adhered to the original ideals of Islam and took also to asceticism and other-worldly activities; and while they "persisted in living according to their ideals, they created a peculiar awe and solemn reverence for themselves among the followers of Islam, for whom amidst their materialistic surroundings, this lure for the primitive had a special fascination". He further adds that India was already familiar with the Hindu ideal of *guru*, which found an appropriate expression in the corresponding belief in a Pir or *Shaykh* in Muslim society. As a matter of fact, "if an ascetic had managed to scorn the world during his life time, his sons and successors were reaping a fruitful crop of worldly gains after his death."² Likewise, in his recent study of the pre-Mughal Muslim society of Bengal, Dr. Abdul Karim observes that pirism did not originate in Bengal, but the long settlement of the Muslims in this land side by side with the local people (many of whom were converted and taken to the fold of

1 See numerous cases in Farid al-Din 'Attar's *Tadhkirat al-Awliya*.

2 Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf: *Life and conditions of the People of the Hindustan* (1200-1550 A.D.), Calcutta, (*J.A.S.B. Letters*, vol. 1, 1935, No. 2) 1935, p. 187.

Islam), made this concept deeply rooted in the society. "The converts found in the Pir a resemblance of the Tantric *gurus* and in the tombs and dargāhs (shrines) that of *Chaltya* or *Stupa*" (worshipped by the Buddhists)¹. A mass of biographical data of the Muslim mystics of Bengal collected by Dr. Karim, suggest that the earliest sufis were known as Shāh² or Shaykh³. This usage of the mystics appears to have gradually changed into later-day pirism.

Dr. Karim considers pirism as the most important element of the popular force of Islam in Bengal⁴. A close examination of the available sources, such as inscriptions hagiological literature, *puthis* etc., shows that superhuman powers were ascribed to the sufis and pirs, such as giving relief to the poor, destitutes and patients, being present at several places at a time, giving life to the dead, killing any body at their will, and foretelling the future⁵. The people considered the dargāh (tomb or shrine) of the Pir as a place of pilgrimage. They made offerings to the Pirs or to their departed soul, built tombs and illuminated them. The rulers made shrines and other establishments attached to them⁶.

In nineteenth century in Bengal James Wise for the first time noted two types of mystics, namely bāshara' (*i.e.*, those whose practices conform to shari'ah or the

1 Dr. Abdul Karim : *Social History of the Muslim in Bengal* down to A.D. 1538, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, 1959, p. 209.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 88 ff.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 90 ff.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 134 ff.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Islamic system of law and morality) and be-shara' (i.e., those whose practices do not conform to the shari'ah)¹. The former type of mystics were also called sālik and the latter majzūb².

He rightly points out that the Arabic term sālik literally means a traveller, and in the mystic terminology, "a traveller in the path of mysticism who conscientiously observes the religious duties prescribed by Islamic law as well". The term majzūb means "one who has lost consciousness"; hence in mystic terminology, it indicates a person who, being overcome by his passion of love for God, has become unmindful to the worldly etiquette³.

It is generally believed that the desires of a majzūb are, in reality, the desires of God expressed through him. In this sense, he is compared with a corpse, resigned completely to the will of God. James Wise says that they "follow their own appetites and passions, eating and drinking whatever they fancy and leading disreputable and scandalous lives". They wander about naked or nearly naked and live on begging or charity and "are universally credited with supernatural powers". On the other hand, the sāliks are, according to Wise, "usually married men of settled habit", who initiate disciples into their orders. Consequently, the sāliks were by far the most respected in Begal⁴.

The popular type of pirism, especially the miraculous concept of the Pirs, and the unusual reverence attached

1 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 53

2 Ibid.

3 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 53-54.

4 Ibid., p. 53.

to their persons, came under sharp criticism of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid¹. Hāji Shari'at Allāh even advocated the abolition of the terms "pir" and "murid" because of this un-Islamic bias. Instead, he introduced the terms "ustād" (*i.e.*, ustādh), which means "teacher" and "shāgird" (*i.e.*, student)². He also opposed the general practice of initiating the ignorant masses into mystic order³. Likewise, Mawlānā Karamat 'Ali made scathing criticism of various un-Islamic practices of the Pirzādahs (hereditary successors of the pirs) and fake Pirs (ja'lipirs)⁴.

(ii) *Mystic Cults (Peculiar to Bengal)* : The Buddhist population of Bengal practised worshipping of *Chaityas* or the *Stupas* and adored them with flowers and burning incense. The Hindus believed in Avatar or incarnation of the deity in human body. These ideas found a suitable parallel in the pirs in the eyes of the local converts⁵. The result was the rise of various local cults around pirism, such as the cults of Pāñch Pir, Mānik Pir, Ghora Pir, Kumbhira Pir, and Madāri Pir⁶. Besides, in the cult of Sa'ya Pir of the Muslims and Satya Nārāyan of the Hindus⁷, the two communities even stood shoulder to shoulder. As a matter of fact, Muslim relics have been found on excavation of Satya Bhīta, which

1 See *supra*.

2 See *infra*, chapter vi, p. 83

3 See *infra*, chapter iii, p. 83 and chapter vii, p. 95.

4 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat*, *op. cit.*, p. 13 f.

5 Cf. Dr. Abdul Karim : *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-64.

6 *Ibid.* pp. 167-70.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 165 ff.

stands on the famous Buddhist monastery at Paharpur in the district of Rajshahi¹. It is interesting to note that these local cults were propagated exclusively through Bengali literature, pointing unmistakeably to their local origin.

(iii) *Other Cults, Rites and Ceremonies* : A number of mystic cults, such as Khawāj Khizr, Zindah Ghāzi, Pir Badar and Shaykh Sādhu became very popular among the Muslims of Bengal². The following example will illustrate the point. The festival of Berā, dedicated to Khawāj Khizr was widely observed in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century by high and low "on the last Thursday of the Bengali month Bhādra". According to James Wise, it coincided with the breaking of the rains and was celebrated by the Muslims as well as by the Hindu boatmen and fishermen. The Berā was "made of paper and ornamented with tinsel"; it had a prow resembling a female face with the crest and breast of a peacock, in imitation of the figure-head on the bow of the Mor-Pankhi (Mayur-Pankhi) pleasure boat". "The effigy placed on a raft of plantain stem, is set afloat at sunset, and with its flickering light gives a picturesque aspect to the dark and flooded stream"³. Ghulām Husayn informs us that Nawāb Sirāj al-Dawlah celebrated it at Murshidabad⁴. In A.D. 1821, it was gorgeously celebrated by the Nawāb of Murshidabad⁵.

1 Cf. K.N. Dikshit : *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 56, Delhi, 1938, p. 80.

2 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 12-20.

3 Ibid, p. 12.

4 Cf. *Siyar al-Muta'akhkharin* (English translation by M. Raymond, edited by John Briggs), vol. ii, p. 533.

5 Brajendranath Bandopadhyay ed., : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B. S. 1339, vol. i, p. 172.

The Muslim immigrants introduced a type of birth day celebration of the Prophet called variously as Mawlid Sharīf, Milād Sharīf or Milād al-Nabī. The procedure of its observation consists of three parts, viz., (a) the narration of events immediately preceding the birth of the Prophet, (b) the description of the occasion of his birth, called tawallud sharīf, and (c) exposition of his teachings. The second part or the tawallud sharīf, is accompanied by a chorus in Arabic, Persian or Urdu. Recently, Bengali chorus has also been introduced. In accordance with traditional procedure, it is necessary to stand up when the occasion of the Prophet's birth is described, and sing the chorus loudly while standing. For, it is generally believed that the soul of the Prophet visits the function at this stage¹.

Likewise, the rites of fatiḥah and 'urs for the remembrance of the dead, were introduced by the immigrants. According to the supporters of these rites, the term "fatiḥah" is derived from the title of the first chapter of the Qur'ān, i.e., surah fatiḥah. This is because the recitation or repetition of surah fatiḥah forms the most prominent part in the procedure of its observation². The general procedure of its observation also consists of three parts, viz., (a) recitation or repetition of the first chapter of the Qur'ān followed by recitation or repetition of some other portions of the Qur'ān, called *suwar*, (b) (entertainment of the guests generally by a square meal, for which one or more fowls or even a goat is

1 *Milad* in this form is still practised widely in Bengal; for further description see *infra*.

2 Cf. MS. *Fatwa* on the legality of *fatiḥah* written in Persian by Mawlavi Faid Ahmad, of the village Chunati, district Chittagong (collected by the present writer from his descendants).

slaughtered, and (c) prayer to God for bestowing the rewards of the recitation and of the feast to the soul of the person or persons in whose remembrance the *fatiḥah* is held, which is called *īsal-i-thawāb*¹.

It may be noted that the rite of *fatiḥah* is observed in remembrance of dead relatives, whereas the rite of '*urs*' is observed as the death anniversary of the *pīrs*. In every detail, it is a *fatiḥah*, but it generally attracts a large gathering. In its popular form, *fatiḥah* used to be observed on the third, fourth, tenth, twentieth and fortieth days following the death of a person, and thereafter observed annually. Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī mentions six types of *fatiḥah* including the one just mentioned². The '*urs*', on the other hand, is observed only once a year. On this occasion, the disciples of the deceased *Pīr* congregate at the *dargāh*, *Khānqah* or at the residence of his successors and pass a few days in mystic exercise and pious contemplation. They usually bring their provisions with them including animals for sacrifice and cash presents for sons and successors of the *Pir*. The fact that the proceedings of *milād*, *fatiḥah* and '*urs*' are conducted mainly in Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages down to the present day points to their non-Bengali origin. Although these customs are not met with in the tradition of the Prophet or that of his immediate successors, they were given a peculiarly Islamic orientation by their enunciators, and became universally popular in the Muslim world during the medieval times.

1 Cf. MS. Fatwa on the legality of *fatiḥah* written in Persian by Mawlawi Faid Ahmad, of the village Chunati, district Chittagong (collected by the present writer from his descendants).

2 Mawlawi Karamat 'Alī, *Haqq al-Yaqin*, Calcutta, A.H. 1344, p. 39.

(iv) *The Shi'ah Influence on the Sunni Society* : The Shi'ah influence was introduced into the Muslim society of Bengal about the sixteenth century A.D., by the Mughal rulers of Delhi, who had imported it from Persia.

From that time many high officials were drawn from the Shi'ah sect, especially from Murshid Quli Khan's time all the Nawabs of Bengal were Shi'ah, who patronised Shi'ah customs and ceremonies¹. Although the religious doctrines of Shi'ah sect did not make noticeable headway among the Muslims of Bengal, the emotional contents of the kārbālā legened succeeded in exerting great influence on the life and thought of the *Sunnī* masses. This is demonstrated in the production of many fine pieces of *Puthi* literature commemorating in the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Husayn, at Kārbālā, growth of a separate branch of Bengali song bewailing the death of Husayn, called zārī gān, and a pompous observance of Muḥarram throughout the country, especially in the towns and cities and in their neighbourhood.

The observance of Muḥarram may be characterised as a street drama in which the sad incident of Kārbālā is reproduced. It is held on the tenth day of Muḥarram, the first month of the Arabian calendar, to commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn. The process begins a few days earlier, with intricate rehearsal and preparation of a *ta'ziah* or the model of bier on which an effigy of Husayn's dead body is placed. On the night of the tenth day, or the manzil kā din, the oldest and the most venerable man sleeps in the building where the *ta'ziah* is kept, and a *parī* (*i.e.*, a fairy) reveals to him "the exact hour that the *Tazia* should be removed, and as that hour approaches

1 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 6.

it is placed on a platform or *Gaddi Nil Bahr* and crowds of Muhammadans assemble and struggle for the honourable post of carrier." It is then carried on in a dramatic procession to a distance of about four miles (in the case of Dacca city) and cast away in a tank¹.

James Wise says that the preparation of *ta'ziah* was (until late years), carried on "in every Muhammadan village, and each strove to make a more laudy model than its neighbours". Garcin de Tassy and Wise considered it as closely resembling the Durgā Puja and *Ratha Yātrā* of the Hindus². "In former days", Wise further adds, "one *Nil Bahr* built on a cenotaph in honour of Bibi Fatimah (the daughter of the Prophet), and for many generations a paper *Tazla*, called *Turbat Haidari*, has been deposited in it during Muharram"³. But at present, in the villages the *ta'ziah*s are not taken out in procession.

(v) *Survival of Local Customs* : It is well-known that many Muslim villagers, especially the women, made offerings to Sitalā Devi, the Hindu goddess of small-pox, down to the early decades of the present century⁴. Another spirit, which was feared by Hindus as well as by the Muslims, was Mātri or *Umm-i-Šibyān*. It was believed to cause convulsion to a child up to the age of 18 months, after which it was powerless to inflict any injury. For the cure of such convulsion an Ojhā or wizard was summo-

1 *Ibid.* p. 9.

2 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 9.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Compare with Shah Isma'il Shahid's criticism of the practice of worshipping the goddess of small-pox in *Taqwiyat al-Iman*, translated into English : *Support of Faith* (by Mir Hashmat 'Ali), Lahore, not dated, p. 50.

ned, and should recovery ensue, he was credited with effecting it¹.

James Wise says that after the birth of a child many strange rites were performed. "A bonfire (alawa) is kept smouldering at the door of *chhatti-ghar* (which he also calls *asuchi-ghar* or polluted room), for six days in the hot, for twenty-one in the cold season and an oil lamp, placed within the room, must never be permitted to go out, an attendant being always on the watch to trim it, as darkness favoured the entrance of evil spirit." Wise further adds that the Hindu mother was confined to this room for six days, and the Muslim mother generally for ten². Many such other customs were observed on the occasions of marriage, circumcision, menstruation and death, especially by the women, which were abolished by Haji Shar'at Allah from the Fara'idi society³.

The Reaction of the Sabiqi to Revivalism : It may be noted that the *Taqwiyat al Iman* of Shah Isma'il Shahid was the first attempt of the revivalists to enumerate the un-Islamic beliefs and practices which were in vogue in this subcontinent. It was published about A.D. 1820. In A.D. 1829, one Mawlawi Muhammad 'Ali of Madras questioned the propriety of the reform doctrines of Shah Isma'il Shahid and Sayyd Ahmad Shahid and advanced 18 questions against the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement⁴.

1 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 50 f.

2 Ibid.

3 See *infra.*, chapters iii and vi.

4 Copy preserved in the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, which also includes answers given by Mawlawi Irtida 'Ali (a follower of Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah) to those questions. See also *J.A.S.B.*, vol. i, A.D. 1832, pp. 479-99; and M. Gracin de Tassy : *Histoire de la Litterature Hindouie et Hindoustanie*, Paris, 1870-71, vol. iii, p. 115.

A similar refutation was published by a learned theologian of Chittagong (at a later date) entitled Sharḥ al-Šudur fi Daf'i al-Šurūr az Radd-i-Taqwiyat al-Imān,¹ which means "a clearance of doubts from the hearts (of men) in defence against evils and in refutation of Taqwiyat al-Imān". Thus, the old society of Indo Pakistan subcontinent reacted sharply to the puritan revivalism of the nineteenth century and in this respect Bengal was not lagging behind.

But the theologians who supported the customs of the Sabiqī society were in a disadvantageous position. For, it was hardly possible to vindicate many of the cults, customs and ceremonies on the basis of the Qur'ān and the tradition of the Prophet and his immediate successors. Besides, many of the traditional customs directly or indirectly infringed upon the strict monotheism of Islām, which were disliked by the learned 'ulamā of the old society. The skilful preachings of the reformists to the masses were also creating doubts regarding the validity of many old institutions. For instance, in an *istīqā* (a formal way of seeking legal opinion from the jurists) of the late nineteenth century, it was asked whether the *fatiḥah* as practised by the Muslims in general was to be regarded lawful or not, on account of its certain resemblances with the Hindu *pūjā*. The theologians (who supported the old custom) wrote a *fatwā* (*i.e.*, legal opinion) to allay the fears². Gradually, however the supporters of the old customs took of law and *taqlid*. (ii)

1 The MS. of the work consisting of about 200 folios in Persian is preserved by Mawlawi Faiyad al-Rahman Khan, village Chunati, district Chittagong.

2 MS. *Fatwa* of Mawlawi Faid Ahmad, *op. cit.*, (in the possession of the present writer).

fātiḥah, (iii) 'urs and (iv) milād, which occupied most important place in the sābiqi social system. .

The reformists themselves were divided on the question of taqlīd, and the argument of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī in favour of taqlīd and the finality of the schools created a good deal of enthusiasm among the theologians¹. The Sābiqi theologians generally argued on the same line though some of them took the extreme view that the shāri'ah (the legal system of Islam) is a technical term which means "these four schools", i.e., Hanafī, Shāfi'i, Mālikī, and Hanbali². Hence those who do not follow the prescriptions of one of the four schools, are not following the shāri'ah in the proper sense. Moreover, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī argued that it was necessary i.e., lāzim, to follow the prescriptions of the schools, whereas the supporters of the old society even did not hesitate to apply the term obligatory, i.e. farīdah, as being the nature of this duty³. Addressing the reformists, Mawlawi 'Abd al-Qādir says, "Oh the followers of lā-madhhab! May you die of your anger! Do not throw slender on others. You are, in fact, corrupters of the world and not reformers"⁴.

1 See *Supra*.

2 Cf. Mawlawi Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir: *Fath al-Mubin fi Radd i-Zafar al-Mubin*, Calcutta, circa., A.H. 1300, pp. 1 and 90. The main theme of the book, as the author puts it, *Hasr-i-Madhab-i-Arba'* i.e., inclusiveness of the four schools.

3 Cf. Mawlawi Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir: *Fath al-Mubin fi Radd i-Zafar al-Mubin*, op. cit., pp. 2-3 and 195-96. It may be noted that the word "lizim" connotes the meaning of "being necessary" in a general sense, and the term "farīdah" connotes an "obligatory duty" expressly enjoined by the *Qur'an*, the rejection of which will turn a Muslim into an infide¹.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 1 and 194.

With regard to fātiḥah, 'urs and mīlād, the Sābiqī theologians admitted that these institutions were not in practice during the time of the Prophet and that of his immediate successors. They were, therefore, innovations. But they argued that all innovations were not necessarily evil; for, there can be two kinds of innovations e.g., good innovations (*bid'at-i-hasnah*) and sinful (*bid'at-i-saiyi'ah*), and they regarded the above institutions as "good innovations".

We have seen above that both in form and procedure of observation, fātiḥah and 'urs were the same. In his Fatwā on fātiḥah, Mawlāwī Fāid Ahmed states that although in the composite form it has not been found in the tradition of the Prophet and that of his immediate successors, yet the parts thereof were practised separately in their times. He, therefore, justifies the propriety of the rite of fātiḥah on this basis¹.

Mīlād as a birth anniversary of the Prophet is regarded as a commendable function by all. It provides a good avenue for the propagation of the teachings of Islam and can be held on any day of the year. It is, in fact, observed by the reformists as well as by the Sābiqī with an equal zeal. The controversy, however, arises on the question of "standing up" or qiyām, at the second part of its procedure when the occasion of the Prophet's birth or tawallud Sharīf is described. The Sābiqī theologians hold that considering the visit of the Prophet's soul, qiyām is not only desirable (mustahab) but near obligatory (wājib)². The reformists, on the

1 MS. *Fatwa*, in the possession of the present writer.

2 MS. *Fatwa* on *milad sharif* of Mawlāwī Sayf Allah Khan of the village Chunati, district Chittagong (collected by the present writer).

other hand, maintain that qiyām is superstitious and polytheistic accretion ; for, according to them "reverence to the unseen" of the type which qiyām involves is due to God alone. They, therefore, regard the practice of qiyām as unlawful¹.

From amongst the reformists, the Ta'aiyuni leader Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali advocated moderation on the question of fātiḥah and mīlād. In *Haqq al-Yaqīn*, he maintained that in so far as fātiḥah represents recitation from the Qur'ān, entertainment of the guests and prayer to God for the well of the dead, it is lawful². Although he does not appear to have expressed his opinions clearly on the point of qiyām, yet there is unmistakeable evidence that he approved of it. For, in a book on mīlād which contains the procedure of qiyām, we find Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali associating himself as the reviser and approver of the work³. Nevertheless, he strongly detested '*urs*' in his *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat* and says, "the rite of '*urs*' was found neither in the tradition of the Prophet nor in that of the two generations that followed him nor even is there any basis for it in the writings of the four imāms" (i.e., the founders of the four sunnī schools of law). It is, therefore, decidedly a sinful innovation. He, however, admits that some of the ancestors practised it. But it was "by way of error or negligence", which should not be a reason for its continuation⁴.

1 Cf. Hafiz 'Abd al-Shakur : *I'lān Wajib al-Idh'an, Milad wa Qiyam par*, Calcutta, 2nd. ed., A.H. 1295, pp. 5-8.

2 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Haqq al-Yaqīn*, Calcutta, circa , A.H. 1344, p.39.

3 *Ihya' al-Qulub fi Mawlid al-Mahbub* (preserved in the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca).

4 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat*, Calcutta, circa . A.H. 1344, p. 12.

As pointed out earlier, *fatiḥah*, '*urs*' and *milād* were imported by the immigrants from the west and occupied important places in the old socio-religious system. Although the history of their origin is obscure and their procedure is not found in the tradition of the early Muslims, yet in course of time they received a peculiar Islamic orientation and their celebration was permeated by pious motive. Moreover, through long practice they also came to be regarded as prototypes of Islamic festivity. The *Sābiqī 'ulamā'*, therefore, succeeded considerably in justifying them simply by exhortation and by exploiting the people's sentiment¹. The case of the local traditions, such as Muḥarram, *Bherā* (or *Berā*), the mystic cults etc., on the other hand, was on a different footing. For, their proximity and resemblance to local *pujās* (worship of gods and goddesses) and local customs rendered their defence on Islamic grounds almost impossible. Moreover, in them, there were many details which pointed to the survival or pre-Islamic practices. The obscurity of the origin of *fatiḥah*, '*urs*' and *milād*, thus, provided even a greater opportunity for their defence. This is, therefore, the main reason why these customs survived a hard struggle of more than one century and the Muḥarram, *Bherā* and mystic cults have mostly died out in the Sunni society of Bengal.

1 A comparison of the arguments advanced by the supporters of the new doctrines and old customs, clearly shows that the latter were setting assertion against the solid reasons of the former. An illustration of these tendencies will be found in Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's argument in favour of *taqlid* as against the arguments advanced by Mawlawi Wilayat 'Ali and Mawlawi 'Abd al-Jabbar in favour of *ijtihad* (see *supra.*, p. 50 f.)

Haji Sharī'at Allah was, however, primarily a reformer and scrupulously avoided anything which might implicate him into politics. Hence, in spite of strained relations between the two parties, no serious conflagration took place between the Fara'iḍis and the Hindu zamindars during his life time. On the other hand Dudu Miyān being a man of bold nature, viewed the situation from a different angle and began to adopt a stronger policy even before he was elected to the leadership of the movement¹.

The coercive measures of the zamindars did little to check the growth of the Fara'iḍi movement². The championing of the cause of the peasantry by Dudu Miyān made it even more popular than before and helped its rapid spread throughout Eastern Bengal³. Backed by popular support, Dudu Miyān felt strong enough on the second year of his leadership (A.D. 1841) to challenge the right of the zamindars to levy illegal cesses and determined to resist the realisation of such cesses by force. This new policy of the movement resulted in a series of violent conflicts, large-scale affrays and accusations and counter-accusations in the law courts from A.D. 1841 to 1846. The continuous victory of Dudu Miyān in almost all of these conflicts, gave him an invincible superiority over the zamindars⁴.

From A.D. 1795 onwards, the Englishmen had made enormous investment of capital in the indigo industry of rural Bengal. During the first half of the nineteenth century, indigo came to be regarded as the most impor-

1 See *infra*, chapter iv, p. 25 ff.

2 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22 f; and *Trial of Dudu Miyān*, pp. 3 and 47.

3 See *infra*, chapter iv, p. 29 ff.

4 See *infra*, chapter iv, p. 30 ff.

tant export goods of Bengal¹. In the district of Dacca, Faridpur and Madaripur subdivision of Bakarganj, where the Fara'idiṣ were most influential, numerous indigo factories were set up by European planters. Indigo was grown by contracts with the peasantry and the mode in which this contract system was developed, proved to be a forced cultivation². For, the lands of the *ra'yats* in which indigo was to be sown was marked out by the planter irrespective of the wishes of the *ra'yats* and the latter had no choice but to sow indigo in them. Moreover, in the process of the payment of remuneration various complicacies cropped up to the utter disadvantage of the *ra'yats*. Naturally the *ra'yats* became averse to indigo cultivation from about A.D. 1822³.

About A.D. 1841, the Fara'idiṣ came in conflict with Mr. Dunlop, an indigo planter of Madaripur, and complained that his manager of Panch Char factory namely Kali Prasad Kanjhi Lal oppressed them like the Hindu zamindars. In process of defending the rights of the Fara'idi peasantry, Dudu Miyān naturally came in conflict with Mr. Dunlop and his manager. About A.D. 1846, violent affrays occurred between the two parties⁴.

1 See *infra*.

2 See *infra*.

3 Cf. *Samachar Chandrika* (Bengali Newspaper), dated the 18th May, 1822, quoted in Brajendranath Bāndopadhyay ed. : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S. 1339, vol. i, pp. 108-109.

4 See *infra*., chapter iv. There is also indication that Mr. Dunlop had joined hands with the Hindu zamindars even earlier in resisting the introduction of Fara'di doctrines among their tenants. In B.S. 1245, that is A.D. 1839-1840, Dr. Dunlop tried to implicate Dudu *Miaan* in a case of plunder before the Magistrate (see trial of Dudu *Miaan*, pp. 3 and 47 as well as Appendix, p. 3).

SECTION C.
Socio economic Background

To the originally religious reform movement of Hāji Shari'at Allāh, Dudu Miyān added a strong socio-economic bias ; and in this socio-economic field, the Fara'idi movement attained the zenith of its popularity by providing a platform for the peasant agitation against the oppressive Hindu zamīndārs and European indigo planters¹. This new development of the movement was a natural growth compelled by a combination of circumstances. It may be recalled that the doctrine of tawhīd or monotheism, as propounded by Hāji Shari'at Allāh, consisted of two parts viz., (i) acceptance of the doctrine of the unity of God, and (ii) rejection of all polytheistic accretions and sinful innovation². In accordance with this doctrine, the Hāji directed his followers to refrain from any such activity which might directly or indirectly militates against the ideal of monotheism. In this context, the Fara'idis came in conflict with the zamīndārs for the following reasons :

In the first place, following the Permanent Settlement of A.D. 1793, the big zamīndāris of Eastern Bengal were mostly owned by the Hindu zamīndārs. The abwābs or illegal cesses which were levied by them on the peasantry included several items of idolatrous cesses, *srudh* or *sraddha* Karchā, paitā kharchā, Rath kharchā³, and *Durga vratti*⁴. Hāji Shari'at Aliān being the exponent of pure monotheism, objected to the payment of these

1. See *infra.*, chapters iv and viii.

2. See *supra*.

3. See *infra.*, Appendix "C", p. 127

4. Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24; see also *infra.*, chapter iv, pp. 26 and 29.

illegal cesses on the part of the Fara'idi¹s, for he viewed them as encouraging polytheism. He, therefore, directed his followers to abstain from paying them. This went against the economic interest of the zamindārs, who, being enraged by this daring action of the Fara'idi leader, imposed in addition a beard-tax on the Fara'idi¹s in accordance with the precedence set by the zaminādr of the 24 Parganahs on the followers of Titu Mir¹. This further aggravated the conflict between the Fara'idi¹ peasantry and the Hindu zamindārs.

Secondly, taking advantage of the weakness of the Muslim masses as a result of the overthrow of the Muslim official class and the impoverishment of the Muslim gentry still living in the rural areas, the powerful Hindu zamindārs prohibited the slaughter of cows within their estates. This restriction was also opposed by the Fara'idi¹ leader ; for, he deemed it not only unjust but also encouraging idolatry as it was imposed solely on account of the Hindu conception of the divinity of cows².

Thirdly, even earlier in A.D. 1831, the Hindu zamindārs apprehended danger at the emphasis laid by Haji Shari'at Allāh on the unity and brotherhood of his followers who were drawn from the peasantry. For the idea of unifying the Muslim peasantry who formed the majority of the population of Dhaka-Jalalpur district (*i.e.*, modern Dhaka and Faridpur), conveyed a potential threat to the interest of the Hindu zamindārs. Hence, they took steps to nip the new movement in the bud³.

1 See *supra.*, p. 1.

2 According to local information gathered by the present writer from the town of Barisal in 1958, cow was publicly slaughtered there for the first time in 1930 when a Muslim Deputy Superintendent of Police was posted there.

3 See *infra.*, chapter iii, p. 15 ff.

Thus, the development of the Fara'idi movement from a purely religious programme to an economic struggle was because of its upholding the cause of the peasantry against the oppression of the zamindars and indigo planters. The great popularity of the Fara'idi movement on this account points to Dudu Miyān's successful utilisation of the antagonism of the peasantry to the zamindars and planters for the enhancement of the movement. The resentment against the oppression of the zamindars and planters was already widespread among the peasantry and Dudu Miyān lost no time to exploit it in his favour. Moreover, the widespread resentment among the peasantry and a general tendency for agitation against the zamindars and planters appear to have arisen from their mutual relationship. Hence, in order to bring out the real import of the socio-economic programme of the Fara'idi movement, an examination of the landlord-peasant and planter-ra'iyat relationship as it existed during the time of Dudu Miyān (i.e. A.D. 1840-1862) is necessary.

Position of the Zamindar in rural Bengal before and after British Ascendancy : During the Muslim rule, the zamindars occupied most important position in the rural society of Bengal. Besides being holders of zamindari estates (which accounted for about 10 per cent of the total arable lands), the zamindars were also regarded as the fiscal officers of the government in whom the task of collecting revenues from the neighbouring landholders and *ra'iyats* and civil and a criminal jurisdiction to try minor cases were vested. For the execution of sentence, they were, however, required to obtain approval of the higher authorities². They were also assigned the Police duty of their areas and in order to enable

² Cf. *Calcutta Review* vol. xii, A.D. 1849, p. 517 ff.

them to prosecute this duty satisfactorily, an establishment of rural Police was attached to their zamindari¹. Moreover, by the terms of the zamindari grant (*sanad*), they were bound to produce the robber and the plundered goods in case of any robbery being committed within their areas². They were also bound to co-operate with the authorities of the civil and criminal courts in apprehending criminals and anti-social elements³. Thus in the rural society, they represented not only the higher class but also the interest of the government.

It may, however, be noted that the assignment of the zamindari was theoretically made on a temporary basis for a term of years or for the lifetime of a zamindar. But in practice the successors of the zamindar were generally allowed to inherit the estate provided the stipulated revenues were regularly paid. The zamindars of Bengal were often considered to be short-sighted and selfish, and hence prone to be oppressive to the ra'iyats and to be refractory to the government. The whole country was, therefore, divided into a number of districts or fawjdari and a fawjdar with the rank of 1,000 to 4,000 horses, was appointed to each. The most important duty of the fawjdar was to keep the zamindars under constant vigilance and wherever necessary, "administer correction to them⁴. Being the administrative head of the distract, the fawjdar was also responsible for the maintenance of peace and tranquility by suppressing all sorts of lawlessness, apprehending criminals, guarding the high ways,

1 Cf. *Calcutta Review*, vol. xii, A. D. 1849, p. 528.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 522-28.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Cf. *Siyar al-Muta'akhkherin* (English Translation by M. Raymond, Calcutta, 1902, vol. iii, pp. 178 ff and 204-205).

ught about a corresponding change in the character of landlord-peasant relationship.

According to an experienced English officer (who wrote in A.D. 1842), the old landed gentry, in spite of their many faults, developed a filial affection for the mass of the people through long and hereditary association with them. Being men of honour, they were actuated in their dealings with the masses by the sentiments of "pride and love" in return of the humble devotion of the peasantry and on account of "terror and shame" at their curses. These sentiments filled their hearts and disposed them to "cherish and protect" the flock of brethren committed to their charge¹. In their different capacity as zamīndārs, representative of the government and protector and patron of the people, they "held sway over the hearts as well as on the life and fortune" of the mass of the people, who on their part looked towards them for leadership and guidance from the depth of the village life².

The modern zamīndārs who succeeded them were, on the other hand, a class of businessmen and adventurers, who invested their capital or grapsed landed property solely for reaping rich profits out of it. In A.D. 1842, the head of the Bengal Police reported that the zamīndārs of Faridpur did not care for anything beyond extorting all they could from their tenants by any means³. Another document published in A.D. 1844, says that the first care of these new zamīndārs after gaining possession of landed property, was to "harbour

1 Cf. *Calcutta Review*, vol. i, A. D. 1844, p. 189 f.

2 *Ibid.*,

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.

colonies of roving banditti and share their plunder"¹. It further accuses them of employing banditti as a fixed source of income.² This is corroborated by the report of the Magistrate of Dhaka-Jalalpur (i.e., modern Dhaka and Faridpur), dated A.D. 1799, which also complains that the zamindars protected the robbers and criminals and shared their plunder³. Moreover, being relieved of responsibility of "producing robbers and plundered goods" from A.D. 1792, no effective check existed to stop the excesses of the zamindars. The English Judges and magistrates (surrounded by a host of native law-officers, Police and clerks who were bribed by the zamindars), were helpless to right the wrongs: rather, by the cunning manipulation of the zamindars, they often proved instrumental to add to the power and influence of the former⁴. In A.D. 1842, the head of the Bengal Police stated that the Hindu zamindars of Fairidpur appeared to have done every thing which could degrade the Muslim peasants, their religion and even their females⁵.

An English officer characterised the change by which the old landed gentry was replaced by the new class of zamindars as a "loathsome revolution" which elevated a class of "miscreant adventurers" to the position of landholders whose oppressive hands "penetrate into and devour the most secret fibres, not of political but of

1 Cf. *Calcutta Review*, vol. i, A.D. 1844, p. 193.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

3 Cf. "A Police Report of the Zilah Dacca-Jalalpur dealing with the manners and morals of the people" (edited by the present writer), *J P H S.*, vol. vii, part i, 1959, pp. 29 and 33.

4 Cf. *Calcutta Review*, Vol. i, A.D. 1844, p. 189 f. and 194 f.

5 See *infra.*, chapter iv, p. 29.

social and domestic existence" and to whom the old spirit of patriarchal and feudal tenderness which protected the masses from destruction, was not known¹. The head of the Bengal Police observed in A.D. 1842, that numerous instances show that the bad passion of the zamindars, "strengthened by a sense of immunity from all control by the Police, nay, of their protection by that body at the time of actual commission of crimes", often lead to daring crimes and licentious tyranny². Another English officer says that the "absolute impunity" enjoyed by the zamindars, not only screens them from the vengeance of law but arms them with an irresistible power to multiply and direct every element of crime to their own profit and the gratification of the desire for rapacity inherent in adventures divorced from every human tie that can inflict remorse³. No wonder, therefore, that the socio-economic conditions of rural Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century reminded this Englishman the Robespierian regime of the Revolutionary France. He says :⁴

"It will be found that the landlords in every district of Bengal have established a reign of terror not very remotely analogous to that of the Robespierian era of the French Revolution. Its foundations are the same, viz., an unlimited command on false witnesses and a tribunal from which is practically banished every check which can distinguish a court from a butcher's shamble."

1. Cf. *Calcutta Review*, vol. i, A. D. 1844, p. 196

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 196

4. *Ibid.*

Evidences at our disposal show that the *ra'iyats* were affected in many ways by the Permanent Settlement. In the first place, it not only handed over the lands to the new class of *zamindārs* in perpetuity but the power of fixing up the rent was also confided them, which permitted reck-renting¹. Moreover, the *zamindārs*, usually farmed out their estates to such contractors or *patnidārs* who offered them the largest profit *vis-a-vis* the government dues. The *patnidārs* again farmed them to sub-*patnidārs* on the same conditions "till farm within farm became the order of the day, each resembling a screw over a screw, the last coming down to the tenants with the pressure of all"². In A. D. 1832, Hugh Stock, the chief of the Revenue Board, mentioned a case in which the *ra'iyat* was four degrees removed from the actual *zamindār* by *patnidārs* and sub-*patnidārs*, each of whom received a profit, which was undoubtedly squeezed out of the income of the *ra'iyat*³. Buchanon found that exactions by confinement or blows were most common and the grant of false receipts by taking advantage of the illiteracy of the *ra'iyat*, was commonly resorted to by the agents of the *zamindārs* and *patnidārs*⁴. The contention of Hugh Stock is corroborated by a local newspaper, which deplored in A. D. 1833, the existence of four to five degrees *patnidārs* in almost all *zamindāri* estates⁵.

1 Mallick: *British Policy*, p. 52.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

4 Cf. M. Martin : *The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India*, London, A.D. 1838, vol. ii, p. 909.

5 Cf. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay, ed. : *Sambad Putre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S. 1342, vol. iii, p. 298.

protecting the tax payers and checking all excesses and oppressions, especially on the multitude¹.

In all events, whether for faithlessness to the government or oppression on the people, the zamīndārī was liable to be snatched away as a measure of punishment. The temporary nature of the zamīndārī tenure and the vigilance exercised by the fawjdār, therefore, operated as checks to the excesses of the zamīndār.

Under the British rule, the position of the zamīndār appears to have undergone a substantial change. In the first place, his jurisdiction to try minor civil and criminal cases was withdrawn and vested in the law courts. Secondly, in A.D. 1793, zamīndārī Police was abolished and replaced by government Police.² Thirdly, in A.D. 1892, the zamīndars were relieved of the responsibility of producing the robbers and plundered goods in the event of any robbery being committed within their estates and declared responsible only in cases of "their connivance with the robbers should be fully proved"³.

Hasting's policy of lease-farming revenues to the highest bidders (A.D. 1772-1793) and Lord Cornwallis' Permanent Settlement (A.D. 1793), had drastically affected the old landed gentry of Bengal. In the first place, the lease-farming system stipulated cash security which the old zamīndārs were unable to pay and the policy of leasing the zamīndāris to the highest bidders attracted a class of speculators from among the bāniyāns (brokers of trade), gomashtahs (agents and managers of trading concerns) mahājans (money lenders) and bankers,

1 Cf. *Siyar al-Mula'akkherin*..... page. 204

2 Cf. *Calcutta Review*. vol. xii, A.D. 1849. p. 528.

3 *Ibid*, vol. xii, 528, and vol. iii, A.D. 1887, pp. 150-51.

all Hindu, who had ready money to undertake such enterprises. Secondly, it is estimated that one-third to onehalf of the zamindaris belonging to the old gentry was sold by the rigours of the laws privedid by the Permanent Settlement, which were mostly bought by the rich parvenus of Calcutta¹. Thirdly, the general tendency of the Permanent Settlement was to recognise the Hindu Naibs and Shiqdars (i.e., managers and tax-collectors of the zamindari estates) who were in the employ of the old Muslim and Hindu zamindars, as landlords². An English document recovered by an English officer in A.D. 1842, states that in one district of Bengal "may now be seen about a dozen of landlords among whom the whole of the soil, with the exception of a few rent-free tenures, is parcelled out. All save two are men whose fathers were menials (i.e., of the old zamindars) and adventures of the lowest extraction"³. James O'Kin-eally observes that the above policy elevated the Hindu tax-collectors, who up to that time held but unimportant position, to the status of landlords⁴.

The revenue policy of the British government, thus, effected a change, not only in the tenure of the zamindari but in the process of that change, the old landed gentry was also replaced by a commercial class of Hindus and by the managers and tax-collectors of the old gentry. This change of hands appears to have bro-

1 Cf. N.K. Sinha : *Economic History of Bengal, from Plassey to Permanent Settlement*, Calcutta, 1956, vol. i, p. 4.

2 Cf W. W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*. London, 1871., p. 159,

3 Cf. *Calcutta, Review*, vol. i, A. D. 1844, p. 193.

4 Cf. W. W. Hunter : *Our Indian Musalmans*, op. cit., p. 160.

Secondly, Metcalfe characterised the Permanent Settlement as the most sweeping act of oppression by which the landed property of the country was transferred from the class of people entitled to it to a set of *Baboos* or Hindu gentlemen "who made their wealth by bribery and corruption". He regarded Lord Cornwallis as the creator of property for the *zamindars* by destroying hundreds or thousands of proprietors for every one of them'. In this process, many *ra'iyats* and sub-tenure holders were dispossessed of their land-rights. This was rendered possible especially because the settlements were usually made without survey, without records of landed rights and even without ascertaining the boundaries of estates². Thus, an English officer found the multitude of rural Bengal in A.D. 1842, "lie trembling on the remotest verge of human misery and brutalisation" and says that no honest and thoughtful person would deny that a peculiar combination of desolating causes was at the root of their misery and which was also responsible for the destruction of their happiness. The main cause, in his opinion, was the overthrow of the old landed gentry by a class of adventurers³.

Thirdly, in the normal process of justice, redress against the oppression of the *zamindars* was almost untainable to the ignorant masses because of the complicated system of civil procedure introduced by the British, the huge expenditure it incurred on the parties to a suit, and the corruption and bribery in which the

1 Cf. J.W. Kaye : *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, London, 1855. p. 254.

2 Mallick : *British Policy*, p. 33.

3 *Calcutta Review*, vol. i. A.D. 1844, p. 189 f.

zamindars and their agents were adept¹. At one time, complaints are said to have crowded upon Hastings whereupon he only had the mortification on finding that the existing system of law left him "without the means of pointing out to the complaints any mode" for getting redress². In A.D. 1782, Sayyid Ghulān Husayn khān reported that the *zamindars* succeeded in getting their servants, favourites, dependents, spies and emissaries into the service of the government ; and in collusion with these hosts of government servants, they "commit upon the inhabitants a variety of oppression" with utmost safety³. In A.D. 1799, the Magistrate of Dhaka-Jalalpur (*i. e.*, modern Dhaka and Faridpur) complained that the *zamindars* concealed and secretly protected the decoys (*i. e.*, robbers) and the agents of the *zamindars* attending the law courts "often act as their spies and give them secret information of any measure taken by the Magistrate against them"⁴. In A.D. 1844, the head of the Bengal Police accused the Police of being collusion with the oppressive *zamindars*⁵. The above evidences, which can be enormously multiplied, show the chances for the *r'iyats*' getting redress of their grievances against the *zamindars* were bleak.

Indigo industry in Bengal : Indigo was cultivated in Bengal from early times. As an export goods, indigo of Bengal found its way to European market in the

1 Millick : *British Policy*, p. 53.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cf. *Siyar al-Muta' akhkherin* (English Translation by M. Raymond *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 175.

4 Cf. *J.P.H.S.* vol. vii, part i, p. 33,

5 See *Infra.*, chapter iv.

middle of the seventeenth century¹. It began to attract European capitalists from the close of the eighteenth century. In A.D. 1795, Mr. Bond, a "free merchant." erected an indigo factory at Rupdiya, in the district of Jessore². Next year Mr. Tuft obtained permission from the government to start an indigo factory at Mahmudshahi, in the same district, and about A. D. 1800, Mr. Taylor is reported to own several indigo works. In A. D. 1801, Dr. Anderson, the Civil Surgeon, erected two big factories, one at Nilganj and the other at Berandi, in the district of Jessore³.

According to government sources, indigo was an indigenous industry in Nadiya, and the big European concerns sprang from "very small native factories" that were bought up by the Europeans⁴. In A.D. 1805, the produce of indigo in Bengal and Bihar amounted to 64,000 maunds, which sufficiently indicates its extensive cultivation and importance as an export goods⁵. In A.D. 1811, the district of Jessore is described as being "crowded with indigo factories"⁶. Gradually, the whole of Bengal, especially the 'indigo districts', namely Faridpur, Dhaka, Jessore, Rajshahi, Nadiya

1 Cf. Mallick: *British Policy*, p. 53, footnote 3.

2 Cf. L.S.S. O' Malley: *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessore*; Calcutta, 1912. p. 40

3 *Ibid.*

4 J.H.E. Garrett: *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia*, Calcutta, 1910. p. 32.

5 Cf. Mallick: *British Policy*. p. 53.

6 Cf. L.S.S. O' Malley: *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessore*, op. cit., p. 40.

and Murshidabad, became "dotted with indigo concerns" owned by English capitalists¹.

Prompted by the rush of English capital to rural Bengal, the indigo industry flourished by leaps and bounds. In A.D. 1843, the annual output of Indigo in Bengal and Bihar had "doubled the figure of 1805² i.e., amounted to about 1,29,610 maunds. Naturally, indigo manufacture was regarded as the "most important industry" of rural Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century³.

Thus, as the policy of revenue farming and Permanent Settlement attracted the parvenus of Calcutta for capital investment, so also the indigo industry attracted the English capitalists to invest enormous sum in the rural economy of Bengal. The former, however, came as Zamindars and as such represented only a change of hands; but the latter being industrialists, opened up a new and profitable avenue in the rural economy of Bengal. How far the indigo planters were profited by their capital investment, does not concern us here. Our interest lies in forming an opinion about the influence that was exerted by them on the rural populace and on rural life. Hence, our study will be confined to three important points, viz., (i) the status of the

1 Cf. J.H.E. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia*, op. cit., p. 32 ; L.S.S. O' Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessore*, op. cit p. 40.

2 Cf. Mallick : *British Policy*, p 53.

3 Cf. J.H.E. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia*. op. cit., p. 32 ; L. S. S. O' Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Faridpur*. Calcutta, 1925, p. 34 ; and Brajendranath Bandopadhyay, ed. : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*. Calcutta. B.S. 1339 (extract from contemporary Bengali newspaper), vol. i, p. 198.

planters in the socio-economic organisation of the rural society, (ii) the mode of indigo cultivation, and (iii) whether indigo industry was profitable to the peasantry or not.

(i) *The Status of the Planter* : In setting up a factory, two things are generally noticeable : an application to the government for licence and another for the allotment of land.¹ It does not, however, appear that at the early stage the planters acquired more quantity of lands than what was barely necessary for the erection of the factories. But soon the European planters gained an important position in the rural society and their growing influence alarmed the zamindars and sub-tenure holders, who, finding their influence being interfered with by the planters, endeavoured to stir up a feeling against indigo cultivation. This clash of interests led to quarrels and disputes and eventually to violent fighting. For, the planters took a serious view of the situation and according to government sources, had recourse to "fighting the native zamindars with bands of clubmen"². Garrett says that the planters were driven to this extreme measure by their failure "to get redress from the Courts"³. The fact that in spite of being Englishmen, they could not get redress from the English Courts, indicates that the planters were on the wrong side.

This conflict is said to have induced the plantersto buy "real property" even at "fancy prices" in order

1 Cf. L.S.S. O'Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessore*, op. cit. p. 40.

2 Cf. J.H.F. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia*, op. cit., p. 32

3 *Ibid.*

to be able to provide lands to the cultivators to grow indigo and thereby to get rid of the annoyance and hostility of the native proprietors of land. The planters thus "surmounted the difficulty" arising from their clash of interests with the *zamāndārs* "by themselves becoming proprietors and sub-tenure holders of the lands" that surrounded their factories¹. Hence, O'Malley could state without hesitation that an indigo concern represented by its manager in the district, "was to all intents and purposes a zamīndārī of the lands belonging to the concern"². The planters themselves appear to have behaved like zamīndārs. They are accused by the Judge of Nadiya in A.D. 1854, of levying illegal cesses on the tenants with which they 'inadequately required the services of labourers, boatmen, and hackney drivers'³. Thus, although the planter was primarily an industrialist, his position in the rural society was analogous to that of a zamīndār.

(ii) *The Mode of Indigo Cultivation*: At the early stage of the industry, the European concerns did not hold lands for the purpose of growing indigo plants. Hence, the planters usually entered into an agreement with the cultivators through the headman of the village to the effect that a certain portion of land of the village be set apart for the cultivation of indigo. At the beginning of

1 Cf. J. H. E. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia, op. cit.*, pp. 32-33

2 Cf. L. S. S. O'Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers Jessore, op. cit.*, p. 103.

3 Cf. *Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i, *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1860, p 4.

the season (*i.e.*, in October), the planter ear-marked the requisite lands for indigo cultivation and made over the necessary quantity of indigo seeds to those *ra'iyats* whose lands were thus chosen¹.

O'Malley holds that lands "suitable for indigo were not generally very suitable for paddy". It will be seen later that this opinion is not borne out by facts though it may be admitted that rotation of indigo and paddy cultivation, as he says, benefited the two crops². At any rate, the cultivation of indigo was simple and less laborious than that of other crops; for, it required no care in between sowing of the seed and cutting of the plants. When the plants were ready for sickle, they were cut, collected in "bundles" and presented to the factory by the *ra'iyat*. In an average good field of one bighā (or $\frac{1}{3}$ of an acre) six bundles of plants were expected and for each bundle the *ra'iyat* received six annas $\frac{3}{8}$ Rupee). Hence, in a good season the *ra'iyat* received an amount of Rs. $2\frac{1}{4}$ as the hire and wage-labour for a bighā of land³.

O'Malley says that this was "probably a fair price for the production of one bighā of land during the first half of the nineteenth century" though at the "close" of that period it was "ridiculously low", as the same average good field would bring a profit of Rs. 16 to Rs. 20, if paddy is sown in it instead of indigo⁴. On the basis of

1 Cf. L. S. S. O'Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessor*, op. cit., p. 104.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cf. L.S.S. O'Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessor*, op. cit., p. 104.

4 *Ibid.*

above calculation, the English writers generally agree that the *ra'iyats* were not averse to indigo cultivation at the beginning but became so later on when the price of other crops, especially that of paddy, "had been doubled" and when the wage of 'agricultural labour also went up'. For, the price of indigo paid by the planters remained "stationery" though the *ra'iyats* were "still required to cultivate indigo to the same extent as before"¹. The above evidence shows that about A.D. 1850, the *ra'iyat* was normally 5 to 7 times loser for cultivating indigo instead of rice.

(iii) *The Indigo Industry and the Peasantry*: Castrell, the Director of Survey (A.D. 1856-1862), noted that the numerous indigo and sugar factories in the districts of Jessore and Faridpur, imparted an air of civilisation². According to O'Malley and Garrett, the districts of Jessore and Nadiya became "dotted with indigo concerns"³ as early as A.D. 1811. The introduction of a large-scale industry in Rural Bengal and the establishment of innumerable factories in the country-side opened up many new opportunities. In the first place, it offered a good deal of employment to the villagers; secondly, as the managers and the employees of the factories lived in the villages, they enriched the coffers of the village shopkeepers and of the producers of foodstaffs; and thirdly

1 Cf. L.S.S. O'Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Faridpur, op. cit., p. 30 ; J.H.E. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Nadia, op. cit., p. 32 and L.S.S. C'Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Jessore, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

2 J.E. Castrell : *Geographical and Statistical Report of the District of Jessore, Faridpur and Bakerganj*, Calcutta, A.D. 1868, p.7.

3 See *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Jessore, op. cit., p.40 and Nadia, p. 32,

the presence of many educated persons, such as the managers, sub-managers, and clerks of the factories, in the rural society was likely to shed the light of civilisation. Thus, the indigo industry could have been a channel, not only for raising the living standard in rural Bengal but also for moral and intellectual upliftment of the mass of the people.

But the findings of the Inquiry Commission of A.D. 1860, pointed on the contrary that the mode of indigo cultivation was ruinous to the peasantry. The Judge of Bakarganj says that in spite of all general advantages, I have not the slightest doubt that the indigo has been obtained on a system ruinous to the Planters' tenants: . . . then, however valuable indigo may be as an article of commerce, it would be better for the sake of the Ryots if there was not a stick of Indigo in the land"¹. The Judge of Nadiya says, "my own idea, however, is that it is no longer enough to measure the advantages of European capital and energy by the value of our exports of Indigo : the effect of the system upon the people should also be considered"². The point, therefore, calls for a close examination.

In the first place, it has been noted above that for setting up a factory the planters applied to the government for "licence" and "allotment of land". It is not known whether any specific jurisdiction was also given to each factory at this early stage. Disputes, however soon arose among the planters themselves as to the

1 *Selections from the Records of Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i, *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1860, pp. 68-69.

2 *Ibid* , p. 1

right of the owner of a factory "to sow in different villages"¹, especially in the neighbourhood of another factory. Even as late as A.D. 1839, "bloody conflict" are reported to have occurred among them on this issue². Consequently the government laid down the boundaries of areas for different indigo factories beyond which no party could extend its indigo cultivation "except under a penalty".³ Thus, in course of time, each indigo factory acquired a specific jurisdiction within which it had the exclusive right to grow indigo.

Secondly, taking the advantage of their superior position as Englishmen and of their monopolistic jurisdiction, the planters compelled the *ra'iyats* to sow indigo under duress even when the latter were unable or unwilling to do so. According to a contemporary local newspaper the *ra'iyats* became generally averse to indigo cultivation in eighteen-twenties, owing to the mode of contract in which they were forced to enter.⁴ This information is significant because it contradicts the opinion of the English writers that the aversion of the *ra'iyats* was due to the rise of the price of paddy⁵. It may be recalled that the mode of indigo cultivation at the beginning was simple : the seed was given free of

1 Cf. J.H.E. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia, op. cit.*, p. 32

2 Cf. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay, ed.: *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 294.

3 Cf. J.H.E. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia, op. cit.*, p. 32

4 Cf. *Samachar Chandrika*, dated the 18th May, 1822, quoted in Brajendranath Bandopadhyay, ed. *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S. 1839, vol. pp. 108-109.

5 See *supra.*, p. xcix

cost, the *ra'yat* sowed it in his land, cut the plants when ready for the sickle and collected them into bundles, then on presenting the bundles to the factory, he received his due¹. The land was, however, marked out by the planter² irrespective of the wishes of the *ra'iyat* who owned the land³, and the *ra'iyat* had no alternative but to sow indigo in it. Nevertheless, as paddy was selling at a very low price, indigo cultivation was profitable. In eighteen-twenties, the mode of transaction between the planter and the *ra'iyat* appears to have changed. For, in this period and afterwards the practice of taking advance-money (*dādnī*) by the *ra'iyat* is almost universally noticeable, and the new mode of contract stood as follows : the *ra'iyat* received the seed as before and an advance of two rupees per bighā and received the rest of the amount, i.e., $\frac{1}{4}$ Rupee on delivery of the bundles⁴. *Samāchār Chandrikā*, a Bengali newspaper (18 May, 1822) states that the *ra'iyats* would neither take advance nor sow indigo willingly because of the mode of contract in which he was forced to take *dādnī* or advance money⁵. As, down to A.D. 1836, paddy was selling at the rate of 4 maunds per rupee⁶, the wage for growing indigo at the rate of $2\frac{1}{4}$

1 See *supra.*, p. xcix ff.

2 Cf. L.S.S. O'Malley : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessore, op. cit.*, p. 104.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Cf. *Selections from the Records of Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i : *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1860, pp. 110-111.

5 Cf. Brajenranath Bandopadhyay, ed. : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S. 1339, vol. 1, pp. 108-109.

6 *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 297.

rupees, was a considerable sum. Hence the argument of the English writers that the reluctance of the *ra'iyat* was due to the rise of the price of rice proves untenable.

Thirdly, from the legal point of view, a contract implies free choice of the parties concerned. But, as the *ra'iyat* had no choice either in the allotment of land or in the matter of sowing, the indigo cultivation was always a forced cultivation. A. Sconce, Judge of Nadiya, says (A.D. 1854) that the *ra'iyats* "are working cattle merely, not men reconciled to labour by their gains"¹. A. Grote, Officiating Commissioner of Nadiya Division, says (A.D. 1856) that "disputes" between the planter and the *ra'iyat* "regarding the forcible sowing of Indigo must, to a certain extent, always exist : for it must be clear to everyone that the cultivation of indigo is for the most part distasteful to the Ryots, who would much prefer cultivating rice and other crops of grain, and seldom, if ever, voluntarily take advances for Indigo"².

Fourthly, according to J. Dunbar, District Magistrate of Jessore (A.D. 1854), the planters "always insisted" on having the "best lands" of the *ra'iyats* for the cultivation of indigo, and at the same time paid "less than a fairly remunerative price" for the bundles of indigo plants when brought to the factory³.

Fifthly, A. Sconce says that the planters of Nadiya are generally accused of measuring "two-and-a-half

1 *Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i : *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, op. cit., p. 4.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

"beegah" of the *ra'iyats* land for one bighā and counted two bundles of indigo plants for one bundle¹. Gopal Lall Mitter, Deputy Magistrate of Natore (in Rajshahi), states from his personal experience (A.D. 1856) that the agents of the planters measured one-and-a-half bighā of land for one bighā and six bunnles of indigo plants for two factory bundles².

Sixthly, Gopal Lall Mitter further states (A.D. 1856) that the *ra'iyats* were "very unwilling to cultivate indigo on the existing system of advances". For, they get an advance of two rupees per *bigha*, and "had to pay out of these two rupees to the *gomashtahs* amins and tagādgirs, who are notoriously known to be an extortionate and oppressive class of people and who never scruple to benefit themselves at the expense of the Ryots"³. Judge A. Sconce says that it is universally assumed that the *ra'iyats* do not retain more than a half or a third or less than a third of the advances ostensively paid to them⁴. "I do not know", he further adds, "to what extent the advance consists partly of cash and partly of unliquidated balances of past years." He saw one case in which the *ra'iyat* received $\frac{1}{2}$ Rupee in cash and $6\frac{1}{2}$ Rupees were adjusted against old balances, for the cultivation of $2\frac{1}{2}$ bighā of land⁵. Judge C. Steer says, "every honest Planter will admit that no Ryot will take

1 *Selection from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i : *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, op. cit., p. 3.

2 *Ibid.*, pp., 110-111

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*, p. 51

5 *Ibid.*, p.52

advance unless he is in the last extremity", and none ever gets out of "the Planter's book" who is once in it. For, "both Planter and Mahājan (money-lender) act in the same way—both take advantage of the Ryot's necessities and both derive a usurious profit from their dealings"¹. Moreover, as the debt roll was taken over from father to son in case of former's death or absconding, "the chronic state of indebtedness" of the *ra'iyats* became a source of "hereditary irritation against the Planters"².

Seventhly, as early as A.D. 1822, the indigo planters are accused by *Samāchār Chandrikā*, a local newspaper, of committing "heartless oppression" on the *ra'iyats* and forcing them to take advance-money (dādan or dādni). It deplores the fact that a *ra'iyat* who takes advance, never gets out of the book till his death. Moreover, his obligations to the planter makes it impossible for him to sow other crops, which often results in his flying away from the village³. In A.D. 1854, the Magistrate of Jessore reported that the oppression of Mr. Rainy, an indigo planter of Khulna, "compelled the ryots to abandon the village" in which his factory was situated⁴. In A.D. 1822, the above local newspaper arraigned that if

1 *Selection from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i : *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, op. cit., p. 68.

2 J.H.E. Garrett : *Bengal District Gazetteers, Nadia*, op. cit., p. 33. ff.

3. Cf. *Samachar Chandrika*, dated the 18th May, 1822, quoted in Brajendra nath Bandopadhyay, ed. : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S. 1339, vol. i, pp. 108-109.

4 *Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i, *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, op. cit., p. 15.

a *rei'yat* did not agree to take advance, his cattle was usually caught hold of by the planter and interned in the factory without supplying it with "grass and water"; and as the cattle becomes lean and thin day by day, the *rai'yat* loses his patience and agrees to take advance-money in order to rescue his most valuable asset¹. In A.D. 1854, the *rai'yat* complained that they were "driven by force or fear to undertake the cultivation of indigo", and that, they were not "allowed to cultivate other crops till they have sown Indigo, first it may be on the Planters' *nijjote* (own land), next on the Ryots' own lands". The *ra'iyyats* "labour and cattle being limited", it was usually "too late" for them to attend to the cultivation of other crops after having satisfied the demands of the planters².

Thus, it has been rightly pointed out that none but a planter would deny that the cultivation of indigo was unprofitable to the *ra'iyyats*³. They had really nothing to gain under a system which was so corrupt and oppressive to them.

It is, therefore, clear that as Englishmen, the planters had many advantages over the *ra'iyyats*. In the first place, Indigo Commission of 1861, says that "the bias of the English Magistrate" has always been "unconsciously towards his countrymen"⁴. Secondly, Ashley Eden testifies that the higher Police officers were very often

1 Cf. *Samachar Chandrika*, quoted in *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 108-109.

2 *Selection from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. xxxiii, part i: *Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal*, op. cit., p. 3.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

4 Cf. Mallick : *British Policy*, p. 58.

bribed by the planters¹. Thirdly, Dr. A. R. Mallick points out that the village watchmen before whom the crimes were committed by the planters, were always silenced by violence and confinement. One Gunni [Ghani?] Datadar, was attacked, injured and confined for four months in a dark room for raising an outcry when one whole village was set on fire by a planter². Fourthly, the planter being a British born subject was under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, which was scarcely accessible to an illiterate *raiyat* living in a remote village amid miserable poverty. Hence, the planter was practically beyond the reach of the law³. Even as late as A.D. 1877, James White, a planter of Nadiya, having murdered Shaykh Munṣif a *raiyat*, by physical assault, could go scot-free on account of the partiality of the Magistrates and Justice Pontifex and the Jury of the High Court of Calcutta⁴.

There is, therefore, little cause to wonder that the socio-economic conditions of Bengal during the first half of the 19th century should have been compared by a thoughtful English Officer, to the Robespierian regime of the Revolutionary France⁵ as has been quoted above.

Conclusion : The above evidence shows that the land revenue policy of the British from A.D. 1772 onwards and the introduction of large-scale indigo industry in rural Bengal from A.D. 1795, had attracted enormous

1 Cf. Mallick : *British Policy*, p. 55.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 55 56.

4 See Appendix J, p. 149 ff.

5 See *supra*.

capital investment from Calcutta. But contrary to all expectation, the capitalists were not only reluctant to share a portion of their profit with the peasantry who laboured for them, but adopted various extortionate and oppressive measures which made the economic condition of the peasantry worse than before. Oppressed by the zamīndārs on the one side and by the indigo planters on the other, the peasantry were reduced to last extremities and the government administration practically did little to redress their grievances against the oppressors. The chronic and widespread resentment which gradually accumulated among the peasantry naturally sought outlet in occasional outbursts. The real import of the affrays and riots which not infrequently took place between the *ra'iyats* on the one hand and the zamīndārs and indigo planters on the other, can, therefore, be properly understood only in this context.

Titu Mir's amazing success within a very short time (from A.D. 1827 to 1831) in organising the peasantry of 24 Parganahs into a formidable block against the Hindu zamīndārs and the European indigo planters, demonstrated for the first time the intensity of resentment against these two classes of exploiters as well as the general demand for efficient leadership. In other words, it showed the fundamental symptoms of a mass agitation ; and it may be said that from his time the peasant agitation of Bengal had come into being, which was to dominate the life and thought of the masses for nearly half-a-century. The struggle of the Fara'iḍī peasantry against the zamīndārs and indigo planters from A.D. 1838 to 1856, led by Dudu Miyan

and the peasant agitation against the indigo planters from A.D. 1854 to 1860 represent new outlets through which this sentiment found expression.

In the contest of physical power with the zamīndārs and indigo planters, Titu Mīr came out victorious. But if the physical power of his enemies failed, their diplomacy won for them not only the sympathy and active support of the government but also the total annihilation of Titu Mīr and his party. For, they succeeded to allure him into a political trap by inciting him to hold his weapons against the government¹. Dudu Miyān's success in overpowering the zamīndārs and the indigo planters and in keeping his legal and political position unimperilled, rather by means of strategy², points undoubtedly to the fact that Dudu Miyān succeeded where Titu Mia failed.

In the broader context of the peasant agitation of Bengal, the socio-economic aspect of the Fara'idi movement represented and an organized attempt of tens of thousands of peasantry, brought to a common platform by religious and doctrinal ties, to get rid of the oppressions and extortions, to which they were subject by the new class of gentry, i.e., the Hindu zamīndārs and European planters. The great popularity gained by Titu Mīr and Dudu Miyān in this field, indicates that the type of leadership provided by them, answered to the demand of the time. Moreover, as the followers of Titu Mīr and Dudu Miyān came exclusively from the lower strata of the people to which they

1 See our article "The Struggle of Titu Mir : a re-examination", *J.A.S.P.*, vol. iv, 1959, pp. pp. 113-33.

2 See, *infra*. chapters iv and viii.

themselves belonged, the socio-economic aspect of their movements also indicates the growth of leadership from among the mass of the people themselves, as the requisite leadership was not forthcoming from the upper class. Hence, as the Fara'iḍī religious programme grew out of the necessity of self-correction of the Muslim society, so also, the Fara'iḍī socio-economic programme developed out of the need for leadership in the lower strata of the Muslim society of Bengal.

PART II

FARA'IDI MOVEMENT

CHAPTER THREE

HAJI SHARI'AT-ALLAH (A.D. 1781-1840)

Early Life

Hājī Shari'at Allāh, the founder of the Farāīdī movement of Bengal, came to prominence only after he started this religious reform movement about the age of 38.¹ He was born of a petty Tālukdār² family and hence did not claim a high or aristocratic birth. It is, therefore, not expected that his early life should have been recorded in a horoscope or family genealogy. Naturally, the chronology of his life has been a subject of endless controversy among scholars.³ Nevertheless, a few fresh sources including one tomb inscription, two manuscript biographies—one in Bengali and another in

1 Haji Shari'at Allah was born in A.D. 1781 (see "Tomb Inscription of Haji Shari'at Allah", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, vol. III, 1958, p. 195), and started his reform movement A.D. 1818 (see *infra*)

2 See *J.A.S.P.*, vol. III, p. 187, footnote 4; J.E. Gastrell *Geographical and Statistical Report of the Districts of Jessore. Fareedpore and Backergunge*, Calcutta, 1868, (hereafter referred to as *Jessore Fareedpore and Backergunge*), p. 36, No. 151; and *Translation of Proceedings held in two cases tried in 1847 before the Session Judge of Dacca in which Doodoo Miyan and his Followers belonging to the Sect of Hajees or Faraizees*, Calcutta, Military Orphan Press, 1848 (hereafter referred to as *Trail of Dudu Miyan*, p. 268, which confirms that the Haji was a petty landholder and possessed a estate of his own.

3 For an elaborate discussion of the controversies, see *J.A.S.P.* vol. III, p. 189f.

Persian—and a number of printed Bengali *Puthis*¹, which have fallen into our hands, have put us on a more advantageous footing to attempt a fuller account of his life.

Haji Shari'at Allah was born in A.D. 1781 at Shamail² a village in the Madaripur subdivision. It may be noted that Madaripur, at that time, formed a part of Bakarganj district and was transferred to the district of Faridpur in A.D. 1873.³ His father 'Abd al-Jalil Talukdar, a man of not very large means, died when he was hardly eight years old.⁴ Thereafter, he was brought up in the family of his paternal uncle 'Azim al-Din. Naturally, he could not receive proper education at his early age though his uncle and aunt—who had no male issue—treated him with tenderness. As a result, he passed his boyhood as a gay and carefree child having little to do with strict discipline.⁵

On a certain occasion, being reprimanded by his uncle, Shari'at Allah left home and ran away to Calcutta

1 These were recovered by the present writer in 1948 and 1949 and are preserved at the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

2 Cf. J.A.S.P., vol. III., p. 187, footnote 4. In the opinion of some local people, he was born in the neighbouring village, Hajipur.

3 Cf. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj, its History and Statistics*, London, 1876, p. 249.

4 According to tradition current in the family of the Haji, his father died when he was about 8 years old and his mother died earlier. This is supported by Munshi 'Abd al-Halim and Wazir 'Ali, Talukdar, the Bengali biographers of the Haji, who maintain that he lost his parents, in his childhood (cf. Munshi 'Abd el-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 1 ; and Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 2).

5 Tradition current in the family of the Haji, supported by Munshi 'Abd Al-Halim MS *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 1.

when he was about twelve years old. There he got an opportunity to present himself to a teacher of the Holy Qur'an namely Mawlānā Bashārat 'Alī, who, taking pity on the boy, enrolled him in his Qur'an classes.¹ Having completed the reading of the Qur'an he proceeded to Phurphura, in the district of Hugly, to take lessons in Arabic and Persian languages on the advice of his teacher.² Within two years he attained considerable proficiency in these languages, and thence proceeded to Murshidabed to meet his another uncle, 'Ashiq Miyān, who was attached to the Murshidabed Court.³ There he continued to read Arabic and Persian under his uncle, and passed about a year in his company before 'Ashiq Miyān decided to visit their native village Shamāil. Then taking his wife and the boy Shar'at Allāh with him, Ashiq Miyān set out for the district of Bakarganj in a small sail boat.⁴ On the way they met a boat disaster in which both his uncle and aunt were drowned, and Shar'at Allāh escaped death by dint of good luck.⁵

This sudden calamity struck so deep in his mind that he gave up all intention to go home; rather he proceeded to Calcutta and presented himself before his old teacher Mawlānā Bashārat 'Alī.⁶ The Mawlānā at that time got disgusted with the British regime and decided

1 Tradition current in the family of the Haji, supported by Munshi 'Abd Al-Halim MS *Haji, Shari'at Allah*, fol 2 f.

2 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 4f.

3 *Ibid.*, fol. 4; and Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 2.

4 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 5 f.

5 *ibid.*, fol. 5-6.

6 *ibid.*, fol. 6-7.

to emigrate to the holy city of Makkah.¹ The boy Shari'at Allāh also wished to accompany him. They, accordingly, set out for Arabia about A.D. 1799.² Thus the boy, who was later to be the founder of a revivalist movement in Bengal, got an opportunity to visit Makkah, the international centre of Islamic culture. It may also be noted that his visit to Makkah was, therefore, not the result of a premeditated plan.

His Education

Shari'at Allāh's elementary education at Calcutta and Hughly served the basis for his higher education at Makkah, which eventually prepared him for the great role he was destined to play in his later life. Scholars differ widely in calculating the chronology of his life though all contemporary and later writers agree that he undertook the journey to Makkah at the age of 18 and returned to Bengal after an absence of 20 years.³ On the basis of his tomb inscription (which was not available to earlier writers) we have fixed the chronology of his life as follows:⁴

Birth	...	...	...	A.D. 1781.
Pilgrimage to Makkah			...	A.D. 1799.
Return to Bengal	...		...	A.D. 1818.
Death	...	...	...	A.D. 1840.

1 'Abd al-Halim : SM. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 7-8.

2 See *infra*.

3 cf. J.A.S.P. vol. III, p. 191f.

4 See J.A.S.P., vol. III, p. 195.

Hājī Sharī'at Allāh's stay in Arabia ranged from A.D. 1799 to A. D. 1818; and if his later life, i.e., his rôle as a preacher, is any guide to his learning, it may be concluded that he took the best advantage of his stay in Makkah. James Wise and Hidayet Hosain testify that he came back from Arabia as a good Arabic scholar and a skilful disputer.¹ His tomb inscription eulogises him as "the learned of all learned, the exponent of Divine Law in eloquent and elegant tongue, the source of all guidance in the lands of Hind and Bengal, defender of religion against the menaces of the Shi'ahs and the disbelievers and against all misguidance, valiant fighter for righteousness against all falsehood and vanity, deliverer of Islam (which) was covered by darkness like the sun enveloped in clouds, whose words in truthfulness were like mountains in the open field .."² His stay in Arabia can be divided into the following three phases :

(i) In the first phase, he spent the initial two years in the residence of one Mawlānā Murād, a Bengali domicile at Makkah, and studied Arabic literature and Islamic jurisprudence under the Mawlānā.³ This prepared him for the regular courses in the religious seminaries of Makkah.

(ii) The second phase which is the most important, lasted for 14 years. During this period he received

1 James Wise : *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884 (hereafter referred to as *Eastern Bengal*), p. 22 ; and M. Hidayat Hosain, "Fara'idi", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., vo. II, p. 57.

2 See *J.A.S.P.*, vol. III, p. 198.

3 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Sharī'at Allah*, fol. 8.

guidance from Tāhir Sombal, a *Hanafi* jurist, who according to the Farā'idis, was reputed for his scholasticism as Abū Hanīfah the Junior (Chhota Abu Hānīfah)¹. Under this learned scholar he studied almost all branches of religious sciences including the mysteries of Sufism. Hājī Shari'at Allāh was also formally initiated into the Qādiriyah order of Sufism,² to which the Farā'idis zealously cling themselves down to the present day.

Identity of Tahir Sombal

To the Farā'idis of Bengal "Tāhir Sombal" is a familiar name. He is remembered by all with utmost reverence and admiration as the teacher (Ustād) and spiritual guide (Murshid) of Hājī Shari'at Allāh. It may be noted that the Farā'idis adhere to Qādiriyah order of Sufism, and the chain of their spiritual guides (silsilat al-Murshidin) proceeds back to Hadrat 'Abd al-Qādir Jilāni through Tāhir Sombal.³ This alone shows in what high esteem the Farā'idis hold him. Besides, all important Farā'idi interpretations of *Shari'ah* rest ultimately on the unassailable authority of Tāhir Sombal. But about his life and career we know very little, as all our knowledge about him is derived indirectly from the biographical data of Hājī Shari'at Allāh. The absence of any external source coupled with the remoteness

1 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Snari'at Allah*, fol. 8-9 ; Wazir Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 2 ; and Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puhi*, p. 9.

2 Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 9.

3 See details in Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, pp. 52-55.

of time, has rendered the task of his identification somewhat a difficult problem.

From the *Fara'iidi* sources this much is clear that Tāhir Sombal was a teacher in a religious seminary of Makkah under whom, as we have mentioned above, Hāji Shari'at Allah studied religious sciences for 14 years. Also, it will be seen later that the Hāji met him at Makkah on his second visit (circa A.D. 1820) and took permission from him for propagating pure doctrines of Islam in Bengal.¹ Tāhir Sombal was, therefore, at the zenith of his fame from about A.D. 1801 to, at least, A.D. 1820.

M. Hidayat Hosain's opinion that the Hāji's teacher whom he calls "ShaiKh Tāhir al-Sunbal al-Makki," and who, according to him, was the head of the Shāfi'i sect at Makkah,² does not, therefore, appear to be correct. In the first place the learned scholar has not been able to cite any authority in his favour. Secondly, an examination of the *Fara'iidi* doctrines shows that they are all Hanafi, in which not a shadow of Shāfi'i influence can be traced, and which, in this respect, stand in sharp contrast with the doctrines of *Ahl-i-Hadīth* movement betraying considerable Shāfi'i leanings. Thirdly, the tomb inscription of Hāji Shari'at Allah categorically states that the Hāji "followed the Hanafi school of law on the path of the *Ahl al-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at*".³ If the Hāji's teacher Tāhir Sombal, to whom he owed almost every thing of his education and training—was a Shāfi'i, it is improbable that no Shāfi'i influence should have

1 See *Infra*.

2 Cf. "Fara'iidi", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. ii, p. 57.

3 See *J.A.S.P.* vol. III, p. 198.

been betrayed by the Hāji and his followers. Besides, Hidayet Hosain's opinion is contradictory to the Fara'idi sources, which call him "Abū Hanīfah the Junior".

The earliest mention of Tahir Sombal is found in the Fara'idi *Puthis*, which call him simply "Tāhir Sombal" "Muhammad Tāhir Sombal."¹ This is further corroborated by current tradition among the Fara'idis. Moreover, the *Puthis* say that "Sombal" was his "urf" or surname, which is generally identified with the Indian town of Sambhal (situated on the Mahishmat Nadi, Ganges, in the Muradabad district of Rohilkhand)² by the Fara'idis of the present time.

(iii) In the third phase, we find Hāji Shari'at Allāh busying himself in the time honoured university of al-Azhar at Cairo. Abd al-Halim records in his biography of the Hāji that after completing his study of religious sciences at Makkah he felt an urge to study "the subtleties of Islamic ideals" at Jāmi'-al-Azhar³. He, therefore, proceeded to Cairo and stayed there for two years.⁴ The current tradition would have us believe that when the Hāji sought permission from his teacher and spiritual guide, Tāhir Sombal, to proceed to Cairo for the purpose of studying Hikmat or philosophy, the

1 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 8; Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, p. 9; and Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 2.

2 Sambhal is described in A.D. 1875-76, as a place where the Muslims were in a majority (cf. A.C.L. Carleyle : *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. XII, pp. 24-27).

3 'Abd al Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 9.

4 *ibid.*

permission was given only with reluctance,¹ probably for fear or disapprobation of rationalism.

It is not known whether the Hāji attended any regular course at the great University. He is, however, said to have spent long hours at the library of al-Azhar. Thereafter, he returned to Makkah, and paying a short visit to Madinah decided to return to Bengal with the intention of propagating pure doctrines of Islam.² This time too, he was permitted by Tāhir Sombal with reluctance : rather, he advised the Hāji to pass sometime more in his company for spiritual training.³ Thus, after an absence of about twenty years Hāji Shari'at Allāh returned home in A.D. 1818.⁴

As the Exponent of the Fara'idi Movement

Having fortified himself with Islamic learning, the Hāji proceeded to his home country for preaching. Here many local socio-religious practices observed by the Muslim masses, which might have been quite normal to him before his pilgrimage to Makkah 20 years back, appeared to him grossly superstitious and un-Islamic. An idea of these practices can be had from the contemporary and near contemporary writings. According to James Wise, "far three generations or fifty

1 Tradition current in the family of the Hāji. It is said that the reluctance was due to the apprehension of Tāhir Sombal that the Hāji might study Greek rationalism at Cairo and get deluded.

2 'Abd al Halim : MS *Haji Sharīyat Allāh*, fol. 10.

3 Tradition current in the family of the Hāji.

4 See J.A.S.P., vol. III, p. 192

years," from the date of the passing of the *Diwāni* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa into the hand of the East India Company (A.D. 1765) down to the advent of the *Fara'idi* movement (A.D. 1818), "the Musalmans of Eastern Bengal, being without a shepherd, were led more and more (away) from their national faith, and conformed to many superstitious rites of the Hindus".¹ James Taylor, a contemporary of the *Hajī*, records a list of superstitious rites and heretic customs practised by the Muslims of Dhaka, Faridpur and Bakarganj, such as *Chuttee*, *Puttee* and *Chilla* connected with the birth of a child, and a number of other rites and ceremonies connected with circumcision, marriage and funeral, which were abolished by the *Hajī*.² At a later date, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali of Jawnpur says:³

"When this humble person toured Southern Bengal in A.H. 1289/A.D. 1872, witnessed much pauperism, lethargy and negligence in matters of religion there, in comparison to other (Muslim) lands."

In his *Puthi*, Durr-i-Muhammad says:⁴

"Where had you been when *Hajī Sharī'at Allah* came thither (to Bengal)?"

"Who did abolish the custom of *Fatiḥah*, the worship of shrines, and stop the corrupt *Mullāh*?"

* * * *

"When he set his foot in Bengal, all *Shrik* (polytheism) and *bid'at* (sinful innovations) were trampled down."

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 21.

2 James Taylor ; *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca* Calcutta, 1840, p. 248. (Referred hereafter as *Topography*).

3 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Qawl al-Thabit*, p. 3.

4 Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, pp. 26'27

He then lists those Shirk and bid'at which were abolished by the Hājī, such as, worship of shrines of Bibi Fātimah¹, Ghāzu,², Kālu³ Pānch Pir,⁴ floating of *Bhera*,⁵ holding of Jāri or bewailing in commemoration of the martyrdom of Hasan and Husayn,⁶ observance of ceremonious dance, music and fātiḥah, planting banana tree around the residence on the occasion of first menstruation of a girl and participation in the *Ratha Yātrā* and other idolatrous customs of the Hindus. Durr-I-Muhammad goes on to say :⁷

"All these Bid'at were then abolished and the sun of Islam rose high in the sky."

"Having arrived there Hājī Shari'at Allāh propagated (true) religion throughout Bengal."

Hājī Shari'at Allāh being a profound scholar in Islamic sciences, and one who had the privilege of being associated for a considerable time with the birth-place and centre of Islamic culture, must have been pained to see such deplorable state of affairs. It is no wonder therefore that he dedicated himself to the onerous task of reforming the Muslim society of Eastern Bengal ; and

1 For description, see James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 9.

2 For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 13.14.

3 For details, see *ibid.*

4 For details, see *ibid.*, p. 17.

5 For details, see *ibid.*, p. 12 f.

6 It may be noted that *Jari* is derived from the Persian word *Zari*, which means bewailing. In Bengali literature the term has come to be specifically used for the bewailing in commemoration of the Martyrdom of Hasan and Husayn, two grandsons of the Prophet, and a rice variety of songs and poetry are known as *Jari Gan* in Bengali literature,

7 Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, p. 27.

it is certainly gratifying to read Hunter's observations, who says, "The rapid spread of the Fara'idi movement in the life time of its founder affords sufficient justification for his enthusiasm."¹

The preaching of Haji Shhari'at Allāh appears to have begun on his way home even before he set foot in Bengal. A number of anecdotes are current about his journey back home. A few of them are related below :

(i) James Wise says that on his way home the Haji fell in the hands of robbers who plundered him of all his possessions including books and souvenirs. But "finding life insupportable without books or relics" he joined the gang himself and shared many of their wandering. "The simplicity of his character and the sincerity of his conviction," however, stirred the conscience of the wicked band, and they "ultimately became his most zealous followers." "Such is the story," says Wise, "told at the present day of the first step taken by this remarkable man."²

(ii) Another story is told to the effect that when the Haji was passing through the Monghyr district of Bihar he found the local Muslims steeped in superstitious beliefs and practices. This touched him so deeply that he decided to stop there for a while in order to urge upon them the necessity of giving up their sinful innovations. He ultimately brought them to the right path before he started again for Bengal.³

1 W. W. Hunter, ed : *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. iv, p. 339.

2 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22.

3 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, p. 10.

(iii) It is narrated that when the Hāji arrived at the residence of his uncle 'Azīm al-Din, none was able to recognise him on account of his long beard and big turban. Soon, however, the news spread that a Hāji has come from Makkah, and many came to see him. As the time of Maghrib (sun-set) prayer drew nigh, he called the Adhān (prayer-call) loudly. But, at his utter surprise, he found not a single person present when the prayer call was over. He wondered at their depravity and said the prayer alone.¹

After the Maghrib prayer he entered into the inner apartment, and found his uncle in death-bed. His uncle recognised him when he disclosed his identity and was much relieved to see him at that last moment. As he had no male issue, he asked the Hāji to look after his family and died that very night.²

It is difficult to say whether the anecdotes are true or the result of hear-say. Their genuineness though can be questioned, they do not contain any superhuman colouring, for which he Fara'didis show little enthusiasm.

He received his next shock on the following day when the funeral of his uncle was held. For, because of his disapprobation of certain un-Islamic rites on the occasion, the villagers refused to co-operate with him in the burial ceremony.³

These incidents led him at once to jump over the wide world with a burning desire to reform the Muslim society of Eastern Bengal. From that day on, he moved

1 'Abd al-Halim : *Haji Sharī'at Allah*, pp. 10-11.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

3 *Ibid.*

ungrudgingly addressing gatherings and preaching pure doctrines of Islam, indoors and outdoors, not only in his own village or in his own district, but in the neighbouring districts well.

It is during this time that he formulated his policy and the line of reform that was to be introduced into the Muslim society of Eastern Bengal. The religious principles which were propagated by him will be examined in a separate chapter. What needs be mentioned here is that he put utmost emphasis on the necessity of observing the *Fara'id* or the obligatory duties by Islam. Naturally, his reform movement came to be known as the *Fara'idi* movement. Initially, however, his movement does not appear to have met with success. This initial failure is supposed to be the cause of his second visit to Makkah.

His Second Visit to Makkah

James Taylor, a contemporary of the *Hāji*, categorically says, "he [*Hāji Shari'at Allah*] visited it [Makkah] a second time and took his abode among the Wahabeees".¹ This is also corroborated Whyazīr 'Alī and Abd al-Halīm.² The latter's long account of the second visit and the tradition widely current among the *Fara'idis*, lead us to believe that this visit took place of in between A.D. 1818 and 1820, and that, it was caused by the failure of his mission in the early stage. The *Hāji*

1 James Taylor : *Topography*, p. 248.

2 Cf. Wazir 'Ali *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 3 ; 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol. 14-15.

felt that the failure was due to his negligence in taking a formal permission from his teacher.¹ It is also said that during his second visit he received an order from the Prophet in a dream to preach true Islam in Bengal.² The reason stated above may or may not be true, and the anecdote about the dream may be questioned as ingenious ; but the fact that the earliest Farā'idis and their descendants are known to the present day as the Sātāis Sani Farā'idi (i.e., the Farādi of B.S. 1227/A.D. 1820-21), tends to explain the gap in between his first return in A.D. 1818 and the second return in A.D. 1820-21.³ The first or the second visit of the Hāji to Makkah, given so much prominence by the Farā'idis is of little significance to us except for academic interest. But what is worthy of our notice is that the Hāji must have started his movement with greater impetus after his second return from Makkah, especially, as on this occasion he obtained permission and blessing of his teacher and spiritual guide Tāhir Sombal. Probably, this is the reason why the Farā'idi movement has been popularly regarded as beginning from B.S. 1227/A.D. 1820, though we have seen earlier that it actually began in A.D. 1818 with the first return of the Hāji.

1 Cf. 'Abd al-Halim : MS. *Haji Shari'at Allah*, fol.13-18.

2 Ibid , fol. 15 ; Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 4 ; and Durr-i-Muhammad *Puthi*, p. 10.

3 Mawlawi 'Adil al-Din, the Persian biographer of the Hāji states that Hāji Shari'at Allah devoted himself to preaching pure doctrines of Islam on his return from Makkah in B.S. 1227/A.D. by 1820-21 (cf. MS. *Halat-i-Karguzari*, fol. 7b). This view is also held by Muhammad Abd al-Bari in his *Nisar al-Din Ahmad Saheber Jivani*, Dhaka, B.S. 1359, p.1.

Spread of the Fara'idi Movement

James Taylor, a contemporary of Hāji Shari'at Allāh, testifies that the Farāidi movement spread with "extraordinary rapidity". "Since his return," says Taylor, "he has been engaged in promulgating his doctrines, and he has succeeded in making converts to the number it is estimated, of one-sixth of the Mussalman population" of the districts of Dhaka, Faridpur, Bakarganj and Mymensingh. He further says that in the city of Dhaka the Farā'idis "are supposed to comprise about one-third of the Mussalman inhabitants."¹

J. E. Gastrell, who was engaged in the survey of the districts of Faridpur, Jessore and Bakarganj from A.D. 1856 to A.D. 1862, observes that the Farā'idis "rapidly increased in number, and the greater part of the Mahomedans of the district (of Faridpur) and many in the neighbourhood districts have now joined the sect".² The Farāidi movement spread likewise in the district of Tippera during the life time of the Hāji.

James Wise has regarded Hāji Shari'at Allāh as the first preacher in the swamps of Eastern Bengal "to denounce the superstition and corruption, which a long contact with Hindu polytheism had developed".³ "His blameless and exemplary life," observes Wise, "was admired by his countrymen, who venerated him as a father able to advise them in seasons of adversity and give consolation in times of affliction".⁴

1 James Taylor : *Topography* p. 248.

2 J.E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 36. no 151.

3 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 21-22

4 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

But as it generally happens with all new movements, the Fara'idi movement was also destined to pass through various handicaps. From the very beginning a section of the conservative Muslims detested the puritanism of the Hāji who were offended by his denunciation of long standing local customs. As time went on the conservative opposition grew in strength. According to a Criminal Judicial report (Robakārī) of the Magistrate of Dhaka-Jalalpur, dated 29 April 1831, the difference of opinion on religious matters existing between the followers of Hāji Shari'at Allah and the inhabitants of a village called Ramnagar led to a serious quarrel and affray fighting in April 1831.¹

The Robakārī calls the Fara'idis "Tueeyyooni Hal" and their opponents "Tueeyooni Sābik" and states that the latter "like the inhabitants of the country generally worship Mahomed and the different Peers" while the former, i.e., the Fara'idi, "reverences neither" and in other matters also disregards established rules.² Barring the misconception of the English magistrate as regards the nature of muslim worship and the consequent exaggeration, we may accept the above statement as reflecting the attachment of the old society to local customs and the puritanism of the new order established by Hāji Shari'at Allah. It, therefore, points to the fact that the Fara'idis were puritan and revivalist of the type of those who became widely known as Wahhābis, whereas the rest of the local Muslims were steeped in superstitious beliefs and practices and,

1 See "Two Fara'idi Documents", *J.A.S.P.*, Vol. vi, 1961 pp. 120-24.

2 See *ibid.*, p. 124

unlike the former, paid unusual reverence to the *Pirs* or mystic guides.

The terminology offered in the above statement is suggestive of an interesting point. The term "Tueey-yooni," more correctly "Ta'aiyunr," is derived from the Arabic word "ta'aiyun" which means "to identify." Hence the term *ta'aiyunni* implies a person who identifies himself with a particular trend or school of law (madhab). It is well known that the Muslims of Bengal, specially in rural areas, were and still are almost to a man *Sunni* belonging to the *Hanafi* school of law¹. The name *ta'syuni* ascribed to both the parties indicates that both belonged to the *Hanafi* madhab. Probably, the term was applied in order to distinguish the *Fara'idis* and their opponents from such radical revivalists who repudiated the need of any regular school of law or madhab and declared themselves as the followers of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* (the Tradition of the Prophet) in accordance with their own understanding and who were rebuked by their opponents as *Lā madhhāt i* i.e., belonging to no recognised school. The distinctive term "Ta'aiyuni *Hal*" applied to the *Fara'idis* obviously means "identifiers on the recent interpretation" i.e., the followers of the *Hanafi* school in accordance with the recent revivalist interpretation; and the other term "Ta'aiyuni *Sabiq*", more correctly "*Sabiq*," applied to the rest of the local Muslims implies identifiers to the *Hanafi* school in accordance with the traditional customs.

¹ See our article "Research in the Islamic Revivalism of the Nineteenth century and its effect on the Muslim Society of Bengal," *Social Research in East Pakistan*, edited by Pierre Bessaiguet, Asiatic Society of the then Pakistan, Dhaka, 1960, p. 33 f. and p. 39 f.

It is further interesting to note that these followers of local customs came later on to be known as *Sabiqi*.¹

We have, however, no other evidence in support of contention that the *Fara'idis* were known as the "Ta'aiyuni". On the other hand, we know that the followers of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali in Bengal were definitely known as *Ta'aiyuni*, especially during the later half of the nineteenth century, who were deadly against the *Fara'idis*.² Although the term "Ta'aiyuni Hal" vaguely corresponds to the actual doctrinal position of the *Fara'idis*, the *Fara'idi* source does not give even the remotest hint that they ever called themselves by that name. The only probable conclusion, therefore, which we can draw is that the *Fara'idis* may have also called themselves *Ta'aiyuni Hal* in the formative stage of their movement in order to assert their affiliation to the Hanafi school and to distinguish themselves from the socalled *La-madhabis*. In that case, it was naturally abandoned soon afterwards when their arch opponent Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali came to the forefront in Bengal with his *Ta'aiyuni* movement about A. D. 1839.

The *Robabari* further states that in this case the *Fara'idis* were tried in a low court and their leaders were sentenced to one year's imprisonment with labour and also awarded a fine of 200 rupees each and in default of payment of the fine, to imprisonment for a further period of one year. The camp followers were awarded similar punishment except that the fine, imposed on them was only 100 rupees each. Subsequently,

1 See foot note No. 1, p. 158, p. 36 f.; and James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 7

2 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 7 *et seq.* and Mawlana Karāmat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, pp. 87-88.

Haji Shari'at Allah himself was apprehended by the police. But as no evidence existed against him, he was let off after he had furnished with a bond on security of 200 rupees to keep the peace for one year.¹

Describing the incident Biharilal Sarkar says. "in A.D 1831 the Eastern Bengal had become excited, and in the month of April of the same year, Shari'at Allah of Faridpur . . . had attacked and looted a village : the entire village was looted because one person of that village did not accept his creed."² On the other hand, the Fara'idis allege that the Hindu zamindars, who were all powerful in the district, were implicated in this case, and that the conflict between the two Muslim parties would not have flared up but for their incitement. The Fara'idis further hold that the incident took place at Nayabari (in the modern Charigram of the Dhaka district) and that, the judgement was influenced by the powerful Zamindars.³ James Wise says⁴ :

"The Hindu Zamindars were alarmed at the spread of the new creed, which bound the Muhammadan peasantry together as one man. Disputes and quarrels soon arose, and Shari'atullah was deported from Nayabari, in the Dhaka district, where he had settled."

It may be noted that after his second return from Makkah, Haji Shari'at Allah had gained a good number

1 See *J.A.S.P.*, Vol. vi, p. 124.

2 Biharilal Sarkar : *Titu Mir* (in Bengali), Calcutta. B.S. 1304 p. 13.

3 Tradition current in the family of Haji Shari'at Allah, and also among the *Fara'idi Khalifahs* of Nayabari,

4 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22.

of followers at Nayābāri, and in order to facilitate the Hāji's frequent visit to that place his disciples had erected an Astāna or rest house for him. In course of time Nayābāri became a major centre of Farā'idi propaganda.

In the face of above evidence Biharilal Sarkar's statement throwing all the blame on the Hāji and his followers, does not appear to be free from prejudice and the implication of the Hindu zamindārs cannot be gainsaid. Unfortunately, however, no further detail of the case is available to us.

The incident of Nayābāri points to the fact that from A.D 1831 the Farā'idi movement came into conflict with the traditional Muslim society on the one hand and with the Hindu zamindārs on the other. As time went on this conflict became more and more clear. We have already stated the reasons of the Hāji's conflict with the followers of the traditional customs. Later on their conservative sentiment was espoused by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali, the well-known Ta'aiyuni leader, who utilised it in his own favour during his many encounters against the Farā'idis. The relation between the Farā'idis and the Ta'aiyunis need not be discussed here. Suffice it to note that it is mainly through the opposition of the Ta'aiyunis and on account of the Bahāth or public debates which frequently took place between the leaders of both the parties that the Farā'idis bound themselves into a strong tie as a religious brotherhood.

The reason of the conflict of Hāji Shari'at Allāh with the Hindu zamindārs is not far to seek. Taking advantage of the weakness of the Muslim masses in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Hindu zamindārs

imposed not only various restrictions on the Muslim peasantry, such as, prohibition on the slaughter of cows within the areas of their zamindāri, but also imposed idolatrous taxes in addition to the lawful land revenues, such as levies for the celebration of Hindu rites and for offering worship to the Hindu goddesses¹ which being idolatrous ceremonies, were strongly detested, by the Muslims.

Hājī Shari'at Allāh being the exponent of Islamic revivalism, disapproved of these unjust and oppressive measures of the zamindārs on the Muslim peasantry, especially because of the encouragement to idolatry involved therein. Moreover, as the Fara'idis accepted him as their leader and guide, they naturally looked upon him for the redress of their grievances. The Hājī, therefore, could not help standing against these oppressive and extortionate practices of the zamindārs. Hence, he directed his disciples to withhold the payment of the idolatrous cesses and encouraged them to slaughter cows, especially at the time of 'Id al Adā (the festival of sacrifice), in which sacrificing cow is less expensive and most convenient in Bengal. It is through this process that the originally religious reform movement of the Hājī, gradually took a social platform. The conflict of the Fara'idis with the Hindu zamindārs was, therefore, of a socio-economic nature rather than the result of fanaticism, as the opponents of Hājī Shari'at Allāh would have us believe.

The zamindārs sharply reacted against this policy of Hājī Shari'at Allāh; for, the nonpayment of idolatrous taxes went against their economic interest and the-

1 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24.

encouragement to the slaughter of cows wounded their feelings. The bitter resentment of the Hindu zamindars against the Fara'idi policy of the nonpayment of puja taxes has been testified by the Head of the Bengal Police in A.D. 1842.¹ and their reaction against the slaughter of cows has been recorded by a Hindu gentleman of Dhaka, who wrote to the editor of a local newspaper, *Darpan*, in A.D. 1837 that a number of "evil person (*Javanas*) from among the followers of Shari'at Allah committed various rapacities of Babu Tarini Charan Majumdar of Patkanda village in the district of Faridpur, i.e., they obstructed the worship of gods and goodesses at his house by their evil actions such as the slaughter of cows." He further informs us that the Babu did not deem it fit to meet the *Javanas* in an open fight and brought the matter before Robert Grote, the Magistrate of Faridpur, and that, after due investigation the Magistrate punished a few *Javanas* with imprisonment.²

The author of the letter draws a horrible picture of the activities of Haji Shari'at Allah and his follwers.

1 See *Calcutta Review*. Calcutta. 1841, Vol. i. pp. 215-16

2 Brajeniranath Bandopadhay : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S. 1342. Vol. III, pp. 311-12 :

"ଆର ଶ୍ରୁତ ହୋଇ ଗେଲ ସରିତୁଳାର ଦଲଭୂତ ଦୁଷ୍ଟ ସବନେରା ଐ ଫରିଦପୁରର ଅନ୍ତଃପାତି ପାଟକାନ୍ଦା ପ୍ରାମେର ବାବୁ ତାରିଣୀଚରଣ ମଜୁମଦାରେର ପ୍ରତି ନାନା ପ୍ରକାର ଦୌରାଞ୍ଚ ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ତାହାର ବାଟିତେ ଦେବଦେବୀ ପୁତ୍ରାର ଆଘାତ ଜନ୍ମାଇଯା ଗୋହତ୍ୟା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି କୁକର୍ମ ଉପଶ୍ରିତ କରିଲେ ମଜୁମଦାର ବାବୁ ସବନପିଗେର ସହିତ ସମ୍ମଧ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଅନୁଚିତ ବୋଧ କରିଯା ଐ ସକଳ ଦୌରାଞ୍ଚ ଫରିଦପୁରେର ମ୍ୟାଜିଷ୍ଟେଟ୍ ସାହେବେର ଛଜରେ ଜ୍ଞାପନ କରିଲେ ଐ ସାହେବ ବିଚାରପୂର୍ବକ କ'ଏକଜନ ସବନକେ କାରାଗାରେ ବନ୍ଦ କରିଯାଇଛେ ଏବଂ ଏ ବିଷୟେର ବିଲଙ୍ଘଣ ଅନୁମତିକାନ କରିତେହେନ ।"

the first place, he reports that the Hāji being imbued with the intention of establishing a kingdom or bādshāhi gathered together a party of about 12,000 weavers and Musalmans around him. He started a new religious doctrine or *shara'* and directed his followers to keep beards and to wear the *chuti* without passing one end between the legs (*kachha Khula*). His followers are also accused of obstructing the worship of Hindu gods and goddesses by entering the Hindu residences around with their cow-skinned belt put on their waist. Secondly, he accuses the Fara'idis of having demolished the twelve *Siva Lingas* which were erected by Diwān Mritunjay Rāy of Rajanagar in the district of Dhaka. Thirdly, all the clerks (*Amlahs*) and pleaders (*Mukhtārs*) of the Faridpur Court, according to him, were disciples of Hāji Shari'at Allāh. Hence, it was easy for the 12,000 united Fara'idis to prove or disprove any legal suit by means of false witnesses.¹

The author of the letter compares the Hāji with Titu Mir who, according to him, also wanted to establish a badshāhi or kingdom and who was crushed by the British government because of his assault on the life and property of the Hindus. Hāji Shari'at Allāh, in his opinion, should also be treated in the like manner. Even more so, because Titu Mir did less than a hundredth part of what Shari'at Allāh's party was doing.²

1 Brajendranath Bandopadhyay : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S., 1342 vol. III, p. 312.

2 Brajendranath Bandopadhyay : *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B. S. 1342, Vol III, pp. 311-12 :

“আমি বোধ করি সরিতুল্লাঘ যবন যে প্রকার দণ্ডবদ্ধ হইয়া উত্তর উত্তর প্রবল হইতেছে অস্ত দিনের মধ্যে হিন্দু ধর্ম লোপ হইয়া আকাশে প্রলয় হইবেক।”

"I am apprehensive," he says, "that the rapidity with which the party and power of the Javana Shari'at Allah, were increasing (if he is allowed to continue), the Hindu religion will soon be destroyed which will bring also world destruction."¹ Hence, he appeals to the editor of Darpan and also to Mr. Grote to take steps for the disbandment of the Hāji's party in order to save the Hindu religion and the country from destruction.

James Taylor (the Civil Surgeon of Dhaka), another contemporary of Hāji Shari'at Allah writes in March, 1839, *i.e.*, just two years after, that the Hāji had "more than once been in the custody to the Police on account of occasioning affrays and disturbances in the town", probably in the town of Faridpur. He adds further that the Hāji "is at present under the ban of the Police, I believe, for exciting his disciples in the country to withhold the payment of revenue."² It is well-known that Hāji Shari'at Allah forbade his disciples to participate in or subscribe to the celebration of Hindu pujās, which, according to him, violated the doctrine of tawhid (*i.e.*: monotheism as interpreted by the Hāji). Taylor's reference to "withholding the payment of revenues" may relate to the idolatrous taxes, such as Kāli Vritti (tax for the Kāli pujā) and Durgā Vritti (tax for the Durgāpujā). For, there is no evidence to show that the Hāji or his successors had ever opposed the payment of the lawful

1 Brajendranath Bandopadhyay Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha, Calcutta, B.S. 1342, Vol. III, pp. 311-12

2 James Taylor; *Topography op. cit.*, p. 250.

land revenues. This view is corroborated by the report of the Head of the Bengal Police dated A.D. 1842.¹

It may be noted further that about A.D. 1837, Dudu Miyān (son of Hāji Shari'at Allāh) had returned from Makkah and begun to take active interest in organising the Fara'idis into a solid block and in training them in the art of affray-fighting. In A.D. 1838, Dudu Miyān was accused by the Police of abetting the plunder of several houses.²

The above evidences show that towards the end of Hāji Shari'at Allāh's life, the Fara'idi peasantry were coming increasingly into conflict with the Hindu zamindārs, probably due to the initiative of Dudu Miyān in upholding the rights of the Fara'idis. But, the violent fighting and large scale affrays, which were to characterise their mutual relations a few years later under the leadership of Dudu Miyān, did not take place during the Hāji's life time. If anything of a serious nature had occurred before the Hāji's death, it must have found a prominent place in the Police reports of A.D. 1838, 1842 and 1843.³ Even the accusation of the Police against Dudu Miyān in A.D. 1838, does not appear to have sufficient grounds, as the case fell through when he was tried before the law court.⁴

The Nature of Haji Shari'at Allah's Movement

Hāji Shari'at Allāh's conflict with the Hindu zamindārs and the cognisance of his activities by the Police, how-

1 See *Calcutta Review*, vol. I, p. 215 f.

2 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

3 See *ibid*, and *Calcutta Review*, vol. i, p. 215 f.

4 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25

ever, should not lead us to think that he ever took the role of a political leader or he ever meddled in politics against the established government of the country. The writings of Wise and Beveridge categorically negate any such proposition. Wise describes the Hāji's movement as "devoid of any political colour" and says that after the Nayabari incident (which took place in April, 1831), the Hāji "acted with great prudence and caution, rarely assuming any other character than that of a religious reformer"¹ Beveridge says² :

"It does not appear, however, that the Ferazis share the dangerous political views of the Wahhabis, or that their revolutionary views extend beyond disputing their landlords' claim for rent. Hindu zamindārs and alarmists generally are fond of representing the Ferazis as politically dangerous, but, I think, without sufficient reason. No doubt, they are more vigorous and less tractable than ordinary Mahomedans ; but this need not be a disadvantage in their character."

The above evidence suggests that the Hāji acted with prudence and always remained a religious reformer. So, if he was put under Police custody, it was not due to his anti-state activities but to his opposition to the oppressive and illegal taxes levied by the zamindārs on the helpless peasantry. Had he betrayed any anti-state activity, he must have been dealt with severely by the British government, as was done in the case of his contemporary Titu Mir.³ Thus, far from being of a poli-

1 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal* p. 22.

2 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakerganj, op. cit.*, p. 225

3 See our article 'The Struggle of Titu Mir, a re-examination, J.A.S.P. Vol. iv, 1959, p. 113 f.

tical nature, the reform movement of the Hāji was out and out religious in character.

Character of Haji Shari'at Allah

Like Titu Mir, Shari'at Allāh was born of an obscure family, and both alike came from the lower strata of the Muslim society ; but unlike the former, the Hāji was profoundly learned in Islamic sciences and the prudence of keeping his reform movement above politics. He was a man of struggle and keen foresight and knew well how to steer his movement clean through political intrigues and temptation. This is one of the main reasons why the Fara'idi movement could not only survive him but flourish and continue down to the present day.

Hāji Shari'at Allāh had a strong but amiable personality. According to James Wise, he was man of middle height, of fair complexion, and wore a long and handsome beard.¹ He possessed a stout and robust health, and usually covered his head with "a voluminous turban."² According to the popular tradition, his appearance was beautiful and awe-striking at the same time, which reflected well the strength of his personality and the softness of his heart. Wise observes that it required "a sincere and sympathetic preacher" to rouse the apathetic and careless Bengali peasant to enthusiasm, and "on one ever appealed more strongly

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

2 Tradition current in the Family of the Hāji.

to the sympathies of the people than Shari'atullah" with his "blameless and exemplary life."¹ In Wise's opinion, the very fact of his rousing the Bengali Muslims to enthusiasm was even "more extraordinary" than his own rising from among the lower classes as the first preacher of puritanism amidst the swamps of Eastern Bengal.²

Hāji Shari'at Allāh died at his native village Shamail, in A.D. 1840, at the age of 59. He was buried at the backyard of his residence, which was, however, washed away by the river Arialkhan (Padma) not very long after his death, leaving to us only the tomb inscription, now preserved by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh at Dhaka.³

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

2 *Ibid.*

3 See *J.A.S.P.*, Vol. III, p. 187 f.

CHAPTER FOUR

MUHSIN AL-DIN AHMAD *alias* DUDU MIYAN (A.D. 1819-1862)

Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyān¹ was the only son of Hājī Sharī'at Allāh. He has been regarded by some as a co-founder of the Fara'iḍī movement². He was born in A.D. 1819³, Mulfatganj,⁴ then a thana in the Madaripur subdivision of Bakarganj district, which was transferred latter to the distict of Faridpur. Although a less accomplished scholar than his father, he played a role in the history of the Fara'iḍī movement which was second to none, rather in certain respects he even excelled his father notably in organising the Fara'iḍī brotherhood into a well-knit and powerful society.⁵

The energetic and dashing career of Dudu Miyan from A.D. 1838 to 1857, struck awe and terror in the mind of his enemies and brought relief to his friends and followers. The popular imagination was replete with his adventurous exploits against the oppressive

1 In the family circle, he was fondly called "Dudu Miyan," by which name he became widely known in his latter life. Wise called him "Dudhu Miyan" (*cf.* James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24). others referred to him as "Dudu Mia" (*cf.* H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj, op cit.*, p. 254), or "Duda Miyan" (*cf.* Karamat Ali : *Hujjat*, p. 86). He is remembered by his followers as "Ustad Dudu Miyan" or "Mawlawi Dudu Miyan". They also called him simply "Ustad" or "Mawlawi". He usually signed his names as "Muhsin al-Din Ah nad 'urf Dudu Miyan". This last spelling has also been adopted here.

2 For instance, H. Beveridge says, "He [Dudu Miyan] and his father, Shariyatollah, may be called the founders of the sect of Ferazis" (*District of Bakarganj*, p. 381).

3 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23 ; compare also *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, p. 4, in which his age has been recorded as 28 years on 30 July 1847.

4 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj*, p. 254.

5 See *infra.*, Chapter viii.

landlords and indigo-planters. The Court files and the police records were full of his accounts. Besides, several *Puthis* were written about his life and career. But a greater part of these materials have been swallowed up by the ravages of time. Still we are fortunate to have the complete proceedings of one of the most intriguing criminal cases instituted against him by the government in 1847,¹ and a good number of brief notices to be found here and there in the Court files, Police records, government reports, in the *Puthis* of Durr-i-Muhammad, Nāzim al Din and Wazir 'Alī and last but not least, in the writings of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī of Jawnpur—which narrate some of the events connected with his colourful activities. In preparing the following sketch of his biography the materials have been drawn from these sources.

His Educational Career: Dudu Miyan's early life passed smoothly under the immediate care of his father, who made provisions for his education at home in Arabic and Persian languages. After he had acquired some proficiency in this elementary education, he was sent to Makkah² about the age of twelve for schooling.³ According to tradition, while on his way to Makkah, he stopped for a few days at Calcutta and paid a visit to Titu Mir, who was then residing in his country home in the district of 24 Parganahs.⁴ As to his activities at

1 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, 354 pages, see *supra.*, Chapter I.

2 M. Hidayet 'Hosain : "Fara'idi," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., Vol ii. p. 58 ; Wazir 'Alī : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 8 ; and James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

3 Tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan.

4 A string of beads, preserved at Bahadurpur in the permanent residence of Dudu Miyan and his descendants, is identified by

Makkah and the duration of his stay there, we have no reliable source of information. The tradition, however, holds that he returned to Bengal after an absence of five years.¹ The government sources mention him for the first time in A.D. 1838, as disturbing the peace of Faridpur,² thus indicating that he had returned sometimes earlier. Thereafter, Haji Shari'at Allāh kept him in his company and gave lessons in his higher studies. This is all we know about his educational career.

As Organiser of Affray Parties : We have seen earlier that towards the end of Hāji Shari'at Allāh's life, he was increasingly coming in conflict with the Hindu zamindārs. As a result, efficient affray fighters were needed in great numbers in order to resist the zamindārs and their agents from oppressing the Fara'idi peasantry. The Haji is, therefore, said to have given the charge of collecting clubmen to one of his influential lieutenants, namely Jalāl al-Din Mullah of Faridpur.³ On his return from Makkah, Dudu Miyan joined hands with Jalāl al-Din and organised regular exercises for clubmanship. In course of a short time, he raised a sizeable volunteer corps of clubmen and trained them into skilful fighters. The above facts will explain why Dudu Miyan was charged by the police in A.D. 1838 with abetting the plunder

Badshah Miyan, the late head of the *Fara'idis*, as a gift of Titu Mir to Dudu Miyan, which was received by the latter at the time of his visit to the former on his way to Makkah. This string of beads has become a memorial and since Dudu Miyan's death, it has been inherited by the subsequent heads of the *Fara'idis*.

1 Tradition current among the *Fara'idis* of Chandpur.

2 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

3 Tradition current in the families of Haji Shari'at Allāh and Jalal al-Din Mullah.

of several houses.¹ The remark of James Taylor that Hāji Shari'at Allāh was put under the ban of the police in A.D. 1839², further indicates that the affray party of Dudu Miyan had at that time gained considerable strength. Endowed with great physical energy and a keen sense of diplomacy, Dudu Miyan appears to have proved more capable in this practical field than in the field of acquisition of theoretical knowledge, as will be seen in the following pages and in a subsequent chapter on social reforms.

As Head of the Fara'idi Movement : When Hāji Shari'at Allāh died in A.D. 1840 the Farā'dis met together and acclaimed Dudu Miyan as their "Ustad" or head.³ This election proved a turning point in the life of Dudu Miyan, and no less in the history of the Farā'idi movement. On his assumption of leadership, the indomitable spirit of Dudu Miyan, which was so long held in sway by the prudent restrain of Hāji Shari'at Allāh, eagerly sought an outlet for expression. He thought that the high-handed oppression of the zamindārs on the Fara'idi peasantry, demanded quick and firm action. This was especially the case in rural Bengal where the government administration was less effective than the whimsical authority of the zamindārs.

In A.D. 1841 and 1842, he led two campaigns against the zamindār of Kanaipur, known as "Sikdārs" (Shiqdār), and of Faridpur, known as "Ghoshes," with the intention of bringing them to reasonable terms with

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

2 James Taylor : *Topography*, p. 250.

3 J.E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 36, No. 151. The "Ustad" literally means "teacher", which was adopted by the Farā'dis as the official title of their Head.

the Fara'idi peasantry ; for, Dudu Miyan found no other course open to him or to his followers to make these oppressive zamindars see reason than by applying force. These campaigns proved success, and helped him to mould a new policy which gave a newer outlook to the Fara'idi movement. These campaigns are discussed below.

The Fara'idis claim that the Sikdars and the Ghoshes had formed a league against the Fara'idi movement. In their attempt to suppress the slaughter of cows (which the Fara'idis openly practised), and to realise idolatrous cesses for the celebration of Kali Puja and Durga Puja (which the Fara'idis refused to pay on principle), the zamindars had devised a variety of intensely painful methods of physical torture.

James Wise says, "the zamindars again endeavoured to prevent their tenants from joining the Fara'idi movement, and, it is said, often punished and tortured the disobedient. A mode of torture, intensely painful, but which left no marks to implicate any one, is said to have been adopted on both sides. The beards of recalcitrant ryots were tied together and red chilli powder given as snuff. Coercion, however, failed, and the landlords did little to check the spread of the revival".¹

The Fara'idis mention a variety of torture to which they were subjected by these zamindars besides the above "chilli powder snuff," such as, (i) severe flogging, (ii) breaking red-ants' nest on the bare body, (iii) throwing chest-deep into a well of rubbish especially devised for the purpose, and (iv) shutting up such insects as grasshopper and white ant on the novel under the cover of a bowl, after forcing the victim lie-

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*. p 24.

down on his back.¹ When these methods failed to turn the Fara'idis from their adherence to Dudu Miyan they imposed the infamous beard-tax, which was invented earlier by the Hindu zamindars of 24 Parganahs to punish the followers of Titu Mir.² The frequent occurrence of torture proved too much for the impetuous Dudu Miyan to put up with silently.

His Campaign against the Sikdar of Kanaipur: In A. D. 1841,³ Dudu Miyan and Jalal al-Din Mullah proceeded to Kanaipur at the head of a few hundred clubmen and encamped within the sight of the landlord's palace.⁴ Dudu Miyan then held out to the zamindar the threat of taking away every brick of the palace if he did not come to terms. The Sikdar was frightened and finding no way out, conceded to his stipulations. It was agreed that physical torture on the Fara'idis would cease and extortion of illegal and idolatrous taxes from them would stop forth with.⁵

His Campaign against the Ghosh of Faridpur: Emboldened

1 Tradition current among the *Fara'idis* of Chandpur and Faridpur.

2 See Biharilal Sarkar : *Titu Mir*, p. 14 ; also, W. W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans*, p. 45, foot note 2. Hunter says Krishan Chandra Rai 'levied a capitation tax, five shillings on each of his peasants who had embraced the new faith' of Titu Mir ; and Biharilal says that the "beard-tax" was charged at the rate of two-and-a-half rupees. It may be noted that keeping beards was made compulsory by both Haji Shariat Allah and Titu Mir. According to the *Fara'idis* they were charged by the Hindu zamindars at the rate of two-and-a-half rupees.

3 Jones Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

4 Among the *Fara'idis* this Palace is known as "Rovon Kuti".

5 This detail is based on current tradition among the *Faraidis*, but is supported by what follows next.

by his easy victory over the Sikdār, Dudu Miyan led another campaign against the powerful Ghosh family of Faridpur in the earlier part of A.D. 1842.¹ The Police report describes the incidents as follows :

"One of the cases of attack at night was of a serious nature. A body, stated at no less than 800 Ferazees the raieuts (ryots) of one Joynarain Ghosh collected together, attacked his *bareh* [residence] plundered it of every thing, and carried off his brother Muddan Narain Ghosh".²

According to the *Fara'idi* sources, Madan Ghosh was killed and buried at the bottom of river Padma.³ Wazir 'Ali says :⁴

"From the year B.S. 1227,
The Hindus bore enmity against the Muslims ;
(And) oppressed the poor (Muslims) in very many ways,
(By) restraining the barber (from serving them),
(and) by tying their beards together.
In this way many a Muslim were oppressed
(Until) they killed the zamindār, Madan Ghosh
(and) disclosed openly that they have eaten him up.
Henceforth the Hindus were terror-striken,
(And) dared not resist the march of Islamisation
Which then proceeded without hindrance".

The Police report further adds, "This outrage shows the combination existing among this sect ; they assembled

1 See, *Calcutta Review*, vol. i, (1844), pp. 215-216; extract from Mr. Dempier's report of 1842, in the Art. "Rural Population of Bengal".

2 *Ibid.*

3 Tradition current among the *Fara'idis*.

4 Wazir 'Ali: *Muslim Ratnahr*, pp. 6-7

from all quarters most suddenly and secretly and after the attack, dispersed in the same manner.¹ In the judgement of the Head of the Bengal Police, this attack was motivated by a desire for revenge and not for plunder. He says : "They were not instigated by a desire of plunder, but of revenge for the oppression and extortion practised on them by this zamindār, and if a tenth part of what they say, after their conviction, stated to me in a petition extenuating their conduct, was true, I am only surprised that a much more serious and general disturbance did not occurI have no doubt, however, of the general truth of the statements, and the zamindārs appear to have done everything which could degrade these men their religion and their females."²

He then cautioned the Magistrate of the district in the following words : "The Magistrate must keep a strict watch, not only over these people, but also over their Zamindārs, particularly if Hindoos, as the latter are very apt to resent the non-payment of these men of puja expenses, etc., which they consider encouraging

"বারশ' সাতাইশ সন এই বাঞ্ছালার
হিন্দুগণ শত্রু হ'ল যে।সমের উপর ॥
গরীব লোকেরে কত মত সাজা দিত ।
মাপীত বক্ষ দ'।ড়ি বাঁধি সাজ। দেলাইত ।
এই মত সাজা কত মোসলমান পাইল ।
মদন ঘোষ জিমিদারে আরিয়া ফেলিল ॥
প্রকাশ করিয়া দিল খেছেছি যদন ঘোষে ।
সেই হইতে হিন্দুগণ পাড়িল তরাশে ।
ইসলামিতে বাধা দিতে না উঠিল মন ।
সানন্দে এসলামি চলে বাঢ়িয়া তখন ॥"

1 *Calcutta Review*, vol I, *op. cit.*, pp. 215—16.

2 *Ibid.*

idolatry, by the very gross ill-treatment. In fact, the Ferazees consider the payment of rent at all, especially to an infidel, as opposed to the word of God, and where a zamindār cares not for his raieuts (ryots) or for any thing beyond extorting all he can from them by any means, a reaction on the part of a fanatical and ill-treated body of men must be expected."¹

On this incident the Magistrate arrested 117 persons, of whom 106 were tried before the Sessions, and finally 22 of them received 7 years' terms of rigorous imprisonment.² According to current tradition, Dudu Miyān was also one of the accused, but was released by the Sessions Judge for lack of evidence against him.³

These initial victories of Dudu Miyān captured the imagination of the masses, and had far-reaching influence on the future course of the Fara'iḍī movement. In the first place, the prestige of Dudu Miyān rose high in the esteem of the down-trodden peasantry, who hailed him as their saviour, and as the champion of their cause. As a result, his name, in the language of James Wise, became "a house-hold word throughout the districts of Faridpur, Pubna, Bakarganj, Dhaka and Noakhali."⁴ Secondly, it gave an added impetus to the Fara'iḍī movement and drew within its fold those Muslims who had so far stood aloof for fear of the oppression of the zamindārs. It is, therefore, not insignificant that the

1 *Calcutta Review*, Vol. i, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-16.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan.

4 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

Bengal Police found Dudu Miyan in A.D. 1843, as the leader of about 80,000 followers "who asserted complete equality among themselves, looked upon the cause of each as that of the whole sect".¹

Reaction of the Zamindars : The zamindars felt grave apprehension at the growing power of the Farā'idi movement and as a measure of safety began to foment the suspicion of the English administrators and indigo-planters. By their instigation Mr. Andrew Anderson Dunlop, an influential indigo-planter, who had a factory at Madaripur,² became an avowed enemy of Dudu Miyan. James Wise says that Mr. Dunlop "several times succeeded in causing him to be arrested and tried for illegal actions". James Wise further informs us that Dudu Miyan was tried for trespass and illegal action in A.D. 1844, and for abduction and plunder in A.D. 1846. But on both these occasions he was acquitted for lack of evidence.³ The Farā'idis, who are often boastful of their exploits against the oppressive zamindars,⁴ do not mention any campaign of Dudu

1 W. W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans*, P. 100.

2 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj, op cit.*, p. 339.

3 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25. In course of his trial in 1847 Dadu Miyan submitted to the Court that Mr. Dunlop never ceased to show enmity towards him and tried to implicate him falsely in various criminal cases since B. S. 1245/A.D. 1839-1840 (*Trial of Dadu Miyan*, p. 47).

4 For instance, the *Calcutta Review* of A. D. 1847, notices the Fara'aidis in the following words : "The Ferazi too can fight, and single exception to the general rule, can boast of it afterwards to the official without scruple" (*cf. Vol. vii, 1847, p. 199*). For an instance of Dadu Miyan's boasting in the Court in A. D. 1857, see, James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

Miyān against indigo planters before A.D. 1846, when they attacked the Brahman Gomāshṭah of Mr. Dunlop. The following Statement of James Wise indicates that the zamindārs and the indigo-planters had made a common cause against Dudu Miyān, apparently induced by their common vested interest which was in danger by the activities of Dudu Miyān. Wise says, "During his [Dudu Miyān's] father life time the sect had opposed or come in contact with the law of the land; and the high handed actions of the son united zamindārs and indigo-planters against him".¹ In 1847, the Government Prosecutor of Faridpur admitted that Mr. Dunlop and the Boboos having resisted the introduction of Fara'idi doctrines among their ryots were brought into collision with Dudu Miyān.²

The propaganda of the zamindārs and indigo-planters against Dudu Miyān and his followers, found ready ears at Calcutta which is evident from the following notice of the *Calcutta Review* in A.D. 1847. It reads : "The Ferazis are the same men who under Titu Mir gave the Government such trouble in Baraset district some fourteen years ago. They are at present headed by one Dudu Miyān and abound in the districts of Dhaka, Faridpore and Bakargunge . The chief tenets of these worthies are that murder and perjury on behalf of the sect, are not only pardonable but praiseworthy . If any disturbance now takes place in Lower Bengal, it will be through the instrumentality of the Ferazis, and though a company of sepoys might put them down,

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24.

2 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, p. 3.

yet it would not be without a considerable effusion of blood."¹

J.E. Gastrell, Deputy Surveyor General and Superintendent of Revenue Surveys, was a contemporary of Dudu Miyān, and was engaged in the survey of Jessore, Faridpur and Bakarganj from A.D. 1856 to A.D. 1862.² As such, he is expected to have authentic information about the Farā'idi leader. But his following statement about Dudu Miyān is hardly corroborated by the evidence available from other sources. He says : "this man is said to have on several occasions abused the trust placed in him by his followers, and to have purchased an estate with the money placed in his hands for religious purposes. He then became a great tyrant, and complaints against him become numerous. In one of these he was tried, convicted and imprisoned".³

He adds further : "In 1857 he was removed to Calcutta, and kept in safe custody there until the close of the great mutiny".⁴

In the first place we know, on the authority of James Wise and Police report that Dudu Miyān was never convicted though he was accused and tried several

1 *Calcutta Review*, Vol. vii, Jan.-June, 1847, p. 199 ; *Art "Indigo in Lower Bengal."* It would appear from the language of the quotation that his Jan-June edition of *Calcutta Review* went to the Press before the incident of the attack of the Faraidis on the indigo factory of Mr. A. Dunlop in December, 1846 at Panch Char in the Madaripur subdivision. Otherwise, such a major attack on a European firm could not have been overlooked.

2 J. E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, front page and p. 46.

3 J. E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 36, No. 151.

4 *I bid.*



times before law courts: and that he was never imprisoned prior to his arrest in A.D. 1857 and removal to Calcutta which was rather for political reasons. About this last trial, James Wise says that in 1857 Dudu Miyan was thrown into prison and the story goes that he would have been released, if he had not boasted that fifty thousand men would answer to his summons, and march withersoever he ordered them.¹ Secondly about the source of his information, Gastrell himself says, "the following description of the origin of this [Fara'idi] sect was given to me at Fureedpore by one of its members "² Now, it is not expected that a follower of Dudu Miyan would spread such blemish against his own leader, if he is not, for some reason or other, disaffected. On the other hand, James Wise testifies the Farā'idis supported him to the last although at one time a few had seceded, but for quite different reasons, as will be seen in the following quotation. James Wise says, "Several actions of their *Pir* [Dudu Miyan] must have been disapproved of by many of his followers, as for instance when he forcibly carried off a Brahmani girl and made her his 'nikah' wife; but even this violent act did not cause them to desert him. On the contrary, they believed in him to the last, and liberally spent their hard earned savings in promoting the interest of the sect. At one time a few disciples seceded. They had been to Makkah and ascertained that the teaching of Mawlawi Karāmat 'Ali was orthodox, that of their own spiritual chief was Wahabi in tendency and heterodox".³

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

2 J. E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 36. No. 151.

3 James Wise ; *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 25-26.

Nevertheless, the erroneous view of Gastrell, coming as it does from a responsible person, carried great influence and eventually misled many including W. W. Hunter.¹ Thus, the enemies of Dudu Miyan were successful to a great extent in their attempt to influence the English official class against the Fara'idi leader.

It appears from the circumstantial evidence, as well as from the Fara'idi sources that after the incidents of A.D. 1841 and 1842, the zamindars were afraid of disturbing the peace of the Faraidis by any direct violent means, although they indulged in hostile propaganda. Kali Prasad Kanjhi Lal, the Brahman *gōnas̤rah* of Mr. Dunlop, who was in charge of Dunlop's indigo factory of Panch Char in the Thana of Mulfatganj, was the only person remained to be dealt with. According to the Fara'idis sources, he was deadly against Dudu Miyan and under the protection of his English master continued to perpetrate oppression on the Fara'idis.² The Fara'idis hold that Kali Prasad used to pose himself as a little zamindar and oppressed the sowers of indigo, a great many of whom were Fara'idis. He forced them to plant indigo, on their best rice-land for only a nominal remuneration and punished the recalcitrant with "chilli powder snuff" and beard-tax."³ Hav-

1 In the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Hunter repeats the views of Gastrell almost verbatim. He says, "This man appears to have abused the implicit confidence reposed in him. He was charged with having applied the subscription to his own use and with many tyrannical acts. On more than one occasion he was sentenced to terms of imprisonment by British Courts" (vol. iv, p. 399).

2 See, H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj*, *op. cit.*, p. 399 and Wazir Ali : *Muslim Rainahar* *op. cit.*, p. 8.

3 Tradition current among the Fara'idis.

Ing settled the matters with the zamnidars, Dudu Miyan turned his attention to this notorious gumastah and directed one of his influential disciples of Narayanganj subdivision, namely Qadir Bakhsh Jan, to lead a campaign against him while Dudu Miyan himself proceeded to Paragarm with the Magistrate on buffalo hunting.¹ James Wise describes the incident as follows:² "On the 5th of December 1846, a large body of armed men attacked and burned to the ground the factory of Panch Chsr. After pillaging the adjoining village³ they departed, taking with them the Brahman Gomashtah, who was afterwards cruelly murdered in the Bakargonj district."

The account of Beveridge agrees with Wise's description and the former adds on the basis of a letter of the Magistrate, that it is said that the body (of Kanjhi Lal) was cut in pieces and thrown into the sea : hence the proverbial expression of making a Kanjhi Lall of one's enemy⁴.

In the opinion of James Wise this attack was motivated by Dudu Miyan's desire of taking revenge against Mr. Dunlop. He does not mention the immediate cause of attack; but points out in a general way that Mr. Dunlop had enmity with Dudu Miyan and the latter bent upon revenge easily found willing against to execute his order⁵. We have, come to know from the proceedings of Dudu Miyan's trial in this case

1 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, p. 48.

2 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25. For details, See numerous statements in the *Trial of Dudu Miyan*.

3 The Name of this village was Shimuliya (see, *infra*.)

4. H. Beveridge : *District of Bakargonj*, p. 340.

5. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

that on 30 Bhadun B. S. 1253, i. e., just 2 months and 20 days before the incident of Panch Char (which took place on Saturday, 21 Agun, 1253) another similar incident had occurred at Bahadurpur at which Mr. Dunlop's *gomashtahs* and Hindu Baboos of Panch Char attacked the residence of Dudu Miyan with 700 or 800 armed men. According to Dudu Miyan's statement before the Sessions Judge, "they broke the front door and murdered four watchmen and severely wounded others and plundered about one and a half lakh repees (1,50,000) in cash and property, concealed the bodies of the slain and presented the wounded persons as part of an unlawful assemblage" to the police. The police officer sent up these wounded men to the Magistrate for prosecution, one of whom Amiruddin succumbed to his wounds and died in the hospital. The Magistrate took no interest in the case. But when on the complaint of Mr. Dunlop's party the *Darogah* (police officer) came to Bahadurpur to investigate into the matter of unlawful assemblage on the part of Dudu Miyan's men, the latter complains that the other party bribed the *Darogah*, kidnapped Dudu Miyan, carried him to Panch Char kept him confined for one night and two days for the purpose of preventing him from recording his statement before the *Darogah*. In the report of his investigation the *Darogah*, who was a Hindu and had natural sympathies with the Hindu Baboos, marked Dudu Miyan absent. Dudu Miyan says that after securing his release from Panch Char he proceeded to Faridpur town and submitted a petition to the Magistrate which the British Magistrate had the pleasure to reject outright. The Magistrate rather advised him to agree to a compromise and recording a proceeding to that effect

asked Dudu Miyan to sign it. But on the latter's repeated refusal the Magistrate agreed to investigate the case and ordered the *Darogah* of Sibchar to repair the roads.¹

In this process while Dudu Miyan kept on attending before the Magistrate at Dhaka and Faridpur and pressing for the investigation, about two and half months were gone. On 19 Aghun 1253, just two days before the Panch Char incident, the Magistrate taking some others with him went on hunting wild buffalo at Paragram from Dhaka. At Paragam, he also set up his court in a tent where Dudu Miyan and other complainants were to keep in waiting. In fact, Dudu Miyan was kept waiting there on the orders of the Magistrate since 16 Aghun. On 20 Aghun, the Magistrate bagged a buffalo and returned to Dhaka keeping Dudu Miyan and others waiting there at the court with words that he would come back soon and take up their cases. Dudu Miyan remained in attendance till afternoon of 21 Aghun (in the early morning of which day the Panch Char incident took place), but as the Magistrate did not return, Dudu Miyan took leave of the subordinate officers of the court and proceeded to Dhaka arriving there in the morning of 22 Aghun by boat. As he approached the residence of the Magistrate, the latter got angry because, as Dudu Miyan says, some of the ladies became frightened at the sight of his beard. The Magistrate ordered him to go to Paragram and keep in waiting there for the hearing of his petition. So he returned to Paragram where the Magistrate also arrived on 23 Aghun. On the face

1 *Trial of Dudu Miyan* pp. 47-48. The *Darogah* who investigated the case was Mirtunjoy Ghose (*ibid.*, p. 14).

of the matter, therefore, Dudu Miyan had little scope to meddle in an affair which took place at Panch Char, at a distance of one and half days journey by boat from Paragram, in the morning of 21 Aghun. At any rate, it was on the 23 Aghun that Dunlop submitted his complaint against Dudu Miyan and his followers to the Magistrate.¹ In this case the Magistrate took prompt action. Edward de Latour testifies that the Magistrate dined with Mr. Dunlop in the tent, discussed the matter with him and after taking the deposition of some of his own creatures committed Dudu Miyan to the Sessions.²

Mr. De Latour attributed the attack to the motive of retaliation against Dunlop's attack on Dudu Miyan's residence,³ In this H. Beveridge also agrees with him and adds that the reason for kidnapping Kanjhi Lal was that the Far'a'idi peasantry considered him as oppressive towards them.⁴ It appears from the Far'a'idi sources that the grievances of the peasantry against Kanjhi Lal were in no way less serious than the grievances of Dudu Miyan against Mr. Dunlop. For example Wazir 'Ali says :⁵

"In the Panch Char of Faridpur district.

There was one of the biggest indigo-factories of Bengal :

In which Kali Kajaliya [Kanjhi Lal] was the manager who used to oppress the Muslims very much.

Qadir Bakhsh Jan, a disciple of the Miyan, one day.

1 *Trial of Dudu Miyan.* pp. 48 and 188-89.

2 *Parliamentary Papers,* vol. xliv, 1861, *Indigo Commission-Extract from Minute of Evidence*, p. 255, Reply No. 3917.

3 *Ibid.*

4 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj*, p. 340

5 Wazir 'Ali *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 8 :

At the behest of Dudu Miyan, taking many (other) disciples with him,
(Led a campaign and) killed the infidel."

On this incident, Dudu Miyan and 63 of his followers were tried before the Sessions Judge of Faridpur, and were convicted in A.D. 1847. But on appeal to the Nizamat Adalat of Calcutta all of them were acquitted.¹ It is said that a Puthi was written glorifying this event, which now appears to have been lost. Only a few lines could be recovered by us from the memory of an old Far'idi of Tippera, which runs as follows :²

"I am, the well-known Najai Shiqdar.
Giving this news in rhyme :

They (the Fara'idis) wear dhuti without passing one end between the legs³, sons of weavers, (and) true believers in Islam."

"ফরিদপুর কিলাধীন পাঁচ চড় পর।
বাঞ্ছালার নীলকুটী ছিল তথা বড় ।
কাণী কাজলিয়া ছিল কর্মচারী বড়।
উৎপীড়ন করিত বর মোসলমান পর।
একদিন যিঙ্গার শিয়া কাদের বক্স জান ।
দূর যিঙ্গার এসারায় লিয়া সুবিদান ।
বেঙ্গলানের তরে সবে মারিয়া ফেলিন ।"

1 See *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, pp. Appendix xxxiii—XL ; James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25

2 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj*, p. 340 ; and Wazir Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 8.

"কবিতাতে বাধিয়া করিবাম প্রচার ।
সেই খুলুকের ধনায়ান নাজাই সিকদার ॥"
তারা কাছাখোলা, জোলার পোলা খাটী মোসলমান ।"

(For reference, see *infra*.)

3 The term used "Kancha Khula," See, also W. W. Hunter, ed. : *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. iv, p. 399 ; and L.S.S. O'Malley : *Bengal., Bihar and Orissa*. p. 210.

* It continues :¹

"It is Dudu Miyan who gave them their dress.

You go home ; believe me ; (and give this message (to others) :

This you may take for granted as the sign of the Ustad (and his followers).

Ustād Dudu Miyan !

Dudu Miyan reforms the country by admonition.

The clubs in the hands of the lower classes go jumping on ;

There, Kamla Chhochha, Pokka Mochha,² go to Chawchuri's residence,

(And) play with their sticks often near the tank of Lālmaniyā. h ! how much can I say about the houses in the hemlet !

"দুদু মির্জা নিষ্ঠা তাগে দিল বস্তুদান।
তোমরা চল্যা ঘরে থাও, কবিলা নাও, কইও মুখের বাণী।
এই মত আনারে ভাই ওষ্ঠাদের নিশানী॥
ওষ্ঠাদ দন্দ মির্জা। দুদু মির্জা তাম নিষ্ঠা রাজা ভাজা করে॥
ছেট লোকের হাতে লাঠি ফাল ফালিয়া ফিরে।
তাতে কমলা ছোচা পোক্ৰা মোছা ছদৱী বাড়ী ঘাস।
মালমনিয়ার পুরুরেতে হামেশা ঘুরায়॥
তাতে ক'ব কত ঘষের মত কত ঘর পাঢ়া।
দুদু মির্জা শিমুলিয়ার র্ণাও কইরা দিল ছাঢ়া॥"

1 The above two passages, apparently from a *puthi*, was recovered from the memory of Mushi 'Irfan al-Din of Bajarikhula in the interior of Sadar sub-division of Tippera, by the present writer. during a tour in 1958.

2 Kamla Chhochha and Pokka Mochha appear to be found names of two trainers in clubmanship, which was, at that time, very important in fighting country affrays.

Dudu Miyan made the village of Shimuliya desolate".¹

According to the prosecution story Dudu Miyan was guilty of "counselling, instigating, procuring and by direct and special orders causing a large body of men—all or chiefly belonging to the sect of Hadjees or Ferazees²—armed with deadly weapons riotously to attack and forcibly to break into the factory of Mr. Andrew Anderson Dunlop" and various shops and houses of Hindu Baboos situated in the village of Panch Char as well as the Kutcherry of Mr. Dunlop and the house of Hadanullah at Kharra Kandi, and to rob and plunder property valued at more or less Rs. 27,000, to burn down the above factory and Kutcherry of Mr. Dunlop and about 40 thatched houses belonging to the Baboos, to cause the wounding of a few persons and to carry off Kali Prasad Kunjhilal, the *gamashtah* of Mr. Dunlop, who "has not since been seen or heard of by his friends".³ Although it was emphatically stated in the charge-sheet that in course of the atrocities many lives were exposed to imminent danger, it was conceded at the same time that by God's grace, all lives were miraculously saved.⁴ Asked to state if there was

1 Shimuliya was a village in the vicinity of the indigo factory of Mr. Dunlop at Panch Char, in which the workers of the factory and the clubmen (*Latiyals*) of Mr. Dunlop, were housed. After razing the indigo factory to the ground, the *Fara'idis* sacked this village as described above.

2 It is interesting to note that according to the prosecution story the party that attacked Panch Char factory included also native Christians (cf., *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, p. 65).

3 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, pp. 1—2 and 313.

4 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, pp. 1—2 and 66—67.

any immediate cause for this outrage, Mr. Dunlop deposed that in the previous indigo-cutting season Dudu Miyan "had many times attempted through his people to prevent my people cutting our indigo plant," whereupon he applied to the Magistrate for protection." Beyond that," he said, "I do not recollect anything in particular."¹

Since the earlier outrage on Dudu Miyan's residence by Dunlop's men could not be cited by the prosecution, Barun Chunder Roy, Mohurrir of the Faujdari Court tried to implicate Dudu Miyan by submitting to the Sessions Judge that in the first place, there was an assemblage of great many people at Mahtabpur near Paragraph, a few days before the occurrence of the Panch Char incident in which Dudu Miyan was present and ordered them to carry on this outrage and that Zahid Khan was the leader of the assemblage as well as of the outrage Secondly, on the day before the incident, a riotous multitude assembled at night in the house of Dudu Miyan at Bahadurpur who came out under the cover of darkness from there to Panch Char and committed the outrage in the morning.² Thirdly, "it is a principle of the Miyan and his followers that they do not consider it a sin to commit outrage against those who do not embrace the doctrines of the Miyan."³ Fourthly, Mr. Dunlop stated that the outrage committed "has been universally attributed" to the orders of Dudu Miyan⁴ Out of 67 prosecution witnesses only one

1 Trial of Dudu Miyan, Appendix p. i.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.* p. 4

person deposed that the people of Bahadurpur" did not unite and attack the factory," but those who committed the outrage came from a distance." He, however, added that after the occurrence he heard from others that they had gathered together on the previous night at Bahadurpur.¹

According to the Fara'idi tradition, the people of Bahadurpur or Faridpur district took no part in this attack. Even they were hardly in the know of it. The party was organised by Qādir BaKhsh Jān at Narayanganj, a subdivision in the district of Dhaka, at the instance of a secret emissary of Dudu Miyan. From Narayanganj the party proceeded at night direct to Panch Char in small groups walking on foot and carrying not a single stick in their hands. After they had crossed the river Padma at some point not far from Panch Char, they were joined by another small party who on previous instructions kept a ready stock of sticks, spears, axes etc., as required for the whole party. From here again breaking up into small groups, they advanced to the factory arriving there almost simultaneously at the break of the dawn. Having accomplished their job they dispersed, broke up in small groups, threw away the sticks and walking willy nilly like ordinary people returned direct to Narayanganj.²

The co-relatives of the incident cited by the prosecution being all fictitious had to produce many forged documents in support of the allegations. But the *Dar gah*, Mr. Dunlop and Hindu Baboos were so much baffled by the ingenious tact of Dudu Miyan that some

1 Trial of Dudu Miyan, p—4

2 Tradition current among the Fara'idis of Faridpur, Narayanganj and Chandpur.

of these documents could not be prepared and submitted to the court within one or two weeks of the date of occurrence of the incident¹⁰. Moreover as the government prosecutor and the police were unable to get into the heart of the matter, Dudu Miyan and the defence witnesses had little difficulty in disproving the prosecution story altogether. By his forceful argumentation Dudu Miyan even succeeded to make the whole case including the occurrence of the outrage itself, appear fictitious.¹

On the basis of the evidence of prosecution witnesses and the *Fatwa* of the Law Officer Mawlawi 'Abd al-Wahid, the Sessions Judge of Dhaka (i.e., the Judge of the Faridpur Sessions Court¹²) Henry Swetenham convicted Dudu Miyan and 48 of his followers and sentenced them to different terms of imprisonment. But as his power did not cover the heavy sentences pronounced, the whole case was sent up to the Calcutta Sudder Nizamut Adalut for confirmation and final orders in August, 1847.³ The Nizamut court being entirely dissatisfied with the evidence against the prisoners set aside the judgment of the Sessions Judge on 23 September, 1847, with the remark that the prosecution story was in part utterly incredible and in part far from trustworthy and conclusive. It was further observed that the evidence

1 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, p. 48.

2 See "A Police Report of the Zilah Dhaka-Jalalpur, dated A. 1799C" (contributed by the present writer) *J.P.H.S.*, vol. vii, part I, 1969, p. 24 f. for the history of the bifurcation of Dhaka, Faridpur and Bakarganj which in earlier times formed one single district.

3 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, pp. 311-13 and Appendix pp. xxvii, xxxiii-xxxviii.

"adduced for this prosecution bears a strong resemblance to that adduced in the case tried by the Additional Sessions Judge of Dhaka Mr. Longman in July, 1841, when the prisoner and many of his disciples were tried and acquitted.¹

This defeat of the prosecution proved a crushing blow to Mr. Dunlop and Hindu Baboos. Dudu Miyan's followers hailed it as a grand victory for the oppressed peasantry and sang "দুদু মিয়া তাম দিশা রাজ্য ভালা করে"². Edward de Latour (who was appointed Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Faridpur in 1847, when the trial of Dadu Miyan was in progress) though considered this attack on Dunlop's factory as a case of retaliation, did not put the blame as much on Dudu Miyan as on the unprincipled and oppressive Mr. Dunlop and the "British born Magistrate" who acted in collusion with him. "It appears to my mind," he says, "to be utterly repugnant to every sense of duty, to be disgraceful to the character of a British Judge : it utterly destroys every feeling of confidence in our courts in the minds of the natives : for what native will bring forward his case when he sees under his own immediate eye-sight such instances of moral corruption in a British magistracy.³ This corruption and ineffectiveness of the British court and disorganised state of administration in Faridpur and neighbouring districts⁴ were evidently

1 Trial of Dudu Miyan Appendix p xxxiii.

2 i. e. Dudu Miyan reform the land by ad nonition !

3 *Parliamentary Papers*, vol. xliv, 1861, *Indigo Commission.. Extract from the Minutes of Evidence*, p. 265, Reply No. 3918.

4 See *ibid.*, for details.

responsible for the then growing popularity of the *Fara'idi Khilafat* system.¹

Dudu Miyan's successful campaign against Kali Prasad Kanjhi Lal removed the last hurdle from his path. Henceforward, the Fara'idis could walk with their heads high without fear of being molested by the zamindars and the indigo planters or by their underlings. As a result, Dudu Miyan appears to have enjoyed the peace of the land from A.D. 1847 to 1857.

From A. D. 1857 to 1860: At the outbreak of the Great Indian Revolt in A.D. 1857, Dudu Miyan was arrested by the British government and removed to Calcutta where he was thrown into prison.² The charge against him, is not stated. James Wise simply says that he would have been released if he had not boasted before the court that 50,000 men would answer his summons and march whithersoever he ordered them.³ Probably, the apprehension produced by Mr. Dampier's police report of A.D. 1843, in which Dudu Miyan was described as a *Wahhabi* leader at the head a "gathering of eighty thousand men,"⁴ – led to this arrest. The reason appears to be purely political; for, as soon as the danger of rebellion had passed off in A.D. 1859, he was released from Calcutta.⁵ But when he reached home, he was again arres-

1 See *infra*, chapter viii.

2 J.E. Gastrell: *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 38; and James Wise *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

3 James Wise: *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

4 W.W. Hunter: *Indian Musalmans*, pp. 100 and 109.

5 J.E. Gastrell: *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 38. He, however, does not give the year, but categorically says that Dudu Miyan was kept in safe custody at Calcutta "until the close of the great mutiny". The date A.D. 1859 is, therefore, easily deducible.

ted by the Police of Faridpur, and imprisoned in the Faridpur gaol. From the account of J.E. Gastrell, the manner of this arrest appears to be most intriguing. Gastrell says, "on his (Dudu Miyan's) return to the district he was cleverly captured to answer another charge against him by one of the Fureedpore *Thannah Darogahs*, who disguising himself and taking some Policemen with him presented himself before Dudu Mean and represented to him that they all desired to join the sect of Ferazees. Dudu on hearing this and suspecting nothing left his hiding place with them, was immediately captured, put on board a boat which the *Darogah* had in waiting, was taken to Furidpur and lodged safely in jail."¹

On this occasion, too, the charge was not stated. Gastrell simply says that when he was "released, he left the district then too hot to hold him, and it is believed, sought refuge in Dhaka, where in 1861, he was said to be very ill."² In the first place, the above statement shows that he was released in the summer of 1860. Secondly, the language itself suggests that he was released from the Police custody without being brought before a law court. This arrest and imprisonment may, therefore, have been merely detention by the Police.

Nature of Dudu Miyan's Struggle: Dudu Miyan's career as discussed above, shows that his antagonism with the zamindars and indigo planters was aimed at giving protection to the Fara'idi peasantry from their oppression. The European writers, however, accuse

1 J.E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 36.

2 *Ibid.*

him of criminality, lawlessness and rebellion against the British government.

(i) Mr. Dampier, the Commissioner of Bengal Police, alleged that "the real object" of the Farā'idiś was the expulsion of the foreign rulers and the "restoration of the Mahomedan power." He characterised Dudu Miyan as a dangerous intriguer and recommended (*circa*. A.D. 1847) his transportation for life and cautioned the government to watch closely the activities of the Farā'idi sect.¹

(ii) Dudu Miyan was linked by a columnist of the *Calcutta Review*, in A.D. 1847, with the disturbances created earlier by Titu Mir. He characterised Dudu Miyan as a criminal and disturber of peace.²

(iii) H. Beveridge refers to Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali and Dudu Miyan as two non-officials, who "exercised more influence than any judge or magistrate" in the district of Bakarganj. He, however, adds that Dudu Miyan's character was "stained with vices," and that, he was not prepared to say that "his influence has been beneficial."³

(iv) James Wise says that Dudu Miyan was "constantly compromising himself by the lawlessness of his conduct." In support of this contention he cites the instances of Dudu Miyan's trials in A.D. 1838, 1841, 1844 and 1846, which we have discussed above.

But, examined in the context of contemporary situation and various odds against which Dudu Miyan struggled, the above allegations appear to be unwarra-

1 *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, Appendix, pp xxvii—xxxiv

2 Vol. vii, p. 199,

3 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj*, London, 1876, p. 87

nted. In the first place, we have seen that the charge of rebellious character against Dudu Miyan has never been proved. In a recent study Dr. Mallick says :¹

"Nowhere do we come across any intention expressed by him (Dudu Miyan) that he wanted or ever aimed at the establishment of political power by the Muslims in place of the British. The only reference of the Fara'idis uniting with the *Wahhabis* for the purpose of creating a disturbance was made by Joint Magistrate of Faridpur in his letter of 27 June, 1857, and that again was based on rumour."

Secondly, we have already noticed that the Hindu zamindars and the European indigo planters and their underlings subjected the peasantry to unbearable extortion and oppression.² It will be seen elsewhere that the zamindar's of Faridpur imposed not less than 23 times of "illegal cesses" on their tenants in addition to the authorised land revenues.³ Dudu Miyan, who championed the cause of the peasantry, could not put up with these oppressive measures silently, and this was the reason which, in course of time, brought him in conflict with the zamindars and the indigo planters. The violence committed by his followers in this process were, motivated by the desire for protecting the Fara'idi peasantry from these oppressive measures. It certainly goes to the credit of Fara'idi movement that not a single person was murdered in the outrage of Panch Char.

Thirdly, Biharilal Sarkar, the Biographer of Titu Mir, says that during the time under review the British

1 Mallick : *British Policy*, p. 75.

2 See *supra*., Chapter II, Section "B".

3 See *infra* , Appendix "C", p. 327.

administration had not taken firm root in rural Bengal, which left the *zāmīndārs* free to dispose off their affairs in accordance with their despotic whims.¹ As late as A.D. 1879, the executive head of the Madaripur subdivision (the home subdivision of Dudu Miyan) admitted, that the government administration failed to protect the *Farā'idi* peasantry from the inhuman oppression of the *zāmīndārs*.² De Latour's evidence further shows that it was almost impossible on the part of Dudu Miyan and his followers to secure justice against the outrages and oppressions of the European indigo planters. In deep remorse, he says, "such was the disorganised state of Faridpur when it was either my misfortune or my good fortune to be sent to that district."³ Dudu Miyan was, therefore, compelled by circumstances to resort to some amount of physical force in the interest of the welfare of the down-trodden peasantry.

Fourthly, H. Beveridge admits that the *Farā'idis* did not appear to "share dangerous political views of the *Wahabis* or that their revolutionary views extend beyond disputing their landlords' claim for rent."⁴ On the other hand, he testifies that the Hindu *zāmīndārs* and alarmists generally were fond of representing the *Farā'idis* as "politically dangerous," but "without sufficient reason." He felt that they were more vigorous and less tractable than ordinary Muslims, "but this need not be a disadvantage to their character."⁵

1 Cf Biharilal Sarkar: *Titu Mir*. Calcutta, B.S. 1304, pp. 14-17.

2 See *infra.*, Chapter v. Section B and Chapter viii.

3 See *Parliamentary Papers* vol. xiv, 1861. Indigo Commission, Extract from the Minutes of Evidence, p. 265, Reply No. 3918.

4 H. Beveridge: *District of Bakarganj*, op. cit., pp 245-55.

5 *Ibid.*

Fifthly, although Hunter accuses the Farā'idis of bigotry and of intolerant attitude to other's points of view, he characterises the later Farā'idis as peaceful cultivators and traders. He says, "at the present day, the Farā'idis do not exhibit any active fanaticism nor would it be just to accuse them, as a class, of disloyalty to the British government. The majority of them are cultivators of the soil but not a few occupy the rank of traders, being especially active in the export of hides. All alike are characterised by strictness of morals religious fervour and faithful promotion of the common Interest of the sect."¹

Thus, it is evident that like Titu Mir, Dudu Miyan was also pitted against the vested interests of the Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters and, as a consequence, was involved into a dangerous situation which threatened not only his life and property but also the very existence of the reform movement led by him. It was, therefore, his uncommon acumen and tactful manipulation of affairs that unabled him to escape from the sorrowful plight in which Titu Mir had got stuck.

Dudu Miyan's Death : At Dhaka, Dudu Miyan lived at Bansal Road, where he was quite often suffering from illness.² Finally, he died there in B.S. 1268 A.D. 1862,³ probably on the 24 September as stated by Wise.⁴ He

1 W. W. Hunter, ed.: *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 339.

2 J.E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Furidpore and Bakergunge*, *op. cit.* p. 36

3 Wazir 'Ali Muslim Ratnahr, p. 9: gives the B. S. date; and W. W. Hunter, ed.: *Imperial Gazetteer of India* vol iv, p. 399: gives the A. D. date. As both the dates correspond with each other, it leaves no room for doubt.

4 See James Wise: *Eastern Bengal*, p. 26.

lies buried at the backyard of the Dhaka residence (137 Bansal Road) in which he lived. His grave still stands on a flat ground, enclosed by a rectangular structure made of brick and plaster.¹

In the light of the above evidence, the contention of James Wise and Hidayet Hosain that Dudu Miyan "died at Bahadurpur, on the 24 September 1860," that, he "was buried there," and that, "the Arial Khan river has within the last few years washed away every trace of his house and tomb,"²—proves incorrect.³ Dudu Miyan's lasting contribution to the *Fara'idi* movement, and the most remarkable achievement had, however, lain in the field of social reform, which will be considered in a separate chapter.⁴

Family Life of Dudu Miyan: Dudu Miyan has been described as a handsome⁵ and tall person with dark flowing beards⁶. He wore a large turban on his head,⁷ Current tradition ascribes 18 marriages to him; but it is said at the same time that he never kept more than four wives at a time. His last wife was a Brahman girl⁸.

1 See our art. "Mazar of Dudu Miyan" in *J. A. S. P.*, Dec. 1982, p. 343 f.

2 James Wise: *Eastern Bengal*, p. 26; and M. Hidayet Hosain: "Fara'idi, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. ii, p. 58.

3 See our article "Mazar of Dudu Miyan" in *J. A. S. P.*, vol. vii, No. 2, December, 1962, pp. 343-48 and the plates showing the picture of the *Mazar*.

4 See *infra.*, Chapter viii.

5 Wazir 'Ali: *Muslim Ratnagar*, pp. 7-8; and Durr-i-Muhammad: *Puthi*, p. 13.

6 James Wise: *Eastern Bengal*, p. 26.

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*, p. 25, also corroborated by tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan.

Muhsin Al-Din Ahmad alias Dudu Miyan

from Kala Mridha¹ (a village about 8 miles west of Bahadurpur, the native village of Dudu Miyan). During his last days at Dhaka, she lived with him and continued to live in the same residence after his death. She lies buried by the side of Dudu Miyan within the same enclosure.²

1 Tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan,

2 Tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan, also attested by the local people of Bansal Road (Dhaka).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUCCESSORS OF DUDU MIYĀN

Dudu's Miyān, death in A. D. 1862, plunged the Fara'di movement into a great crisis. We have seen earlier that it was the personality of Hājī Shari'at Allāh, and the firmness and courage of Dudu Miyān that inspired the rural Muslim society of Faridpur and its neighbouring districts with the zeal for reform and eventually brought a large number of Muslim inhabitants of Eastern Bengal under one banner. On the death of Dudu Miyān this personal force was found lacking.

Dudu Miyān left three sons behind him. The eldest Ghiyāth al-Dīn Haydar succeeded to the leadership,¹ about whose activities, we have no authentic information. He appears to have died shortly after his election probably in A. D. 1864,² and was succeeded by the second son of Dudu Miyān namely 'Abd al-Ghafur alias Naya Miyān, who was, according to tradition, only twelve years old at that time.³

Soon after Dudu Miyān's death, the zāmīndārs of Faridpur renewed their old hostilities against the Fara'dis, and the intensity of their oppression daily increased. On one occasion the agents of the zāmīndārs made a night attack on the residence of Dudu

1 Wazir 'Ali: *Muslim Ratnahr*, p 9.

2 The date has been calculated on the basis of current tradition, see next note.

3 Tradition current in the family of Naya Miyan. He was born A. D. 1852 (see *infra*). His election to leadership in A. D. 1864, also indicates that his elder brother Ghiyath al-Din Haydar died in the same year.

Miyān's family at Bahadurpur, and burned all the houses to the ground.¹

Thus, the hostilities of the zamīndārs threatened the security of Dudu Miyān's family² and followers.

On the other hand, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali of Jawnpur, who opposed the Fara'iḍī doctrines, launched a series of mass campaign with the intention of demolishing Fara'iḍī movement root and branch. He tried to stigmatise Hāji Shari'at Allah and his followers by designating them as "the Khārijīs of Bengal,"³ and preached untiringly against them in the towns and market places (bāzārs), as well as in the village mosques, throughout the length and breadth of Eastern Bengal.⁴ This threatened the existence of the Fara'iḍī movement itself. The following observation of James Wise testifies to the trying situation in which the Fara'iḍīs were landed. He says,⁵ "Three sons [of Dudu Miyān] survive, of whom none has as yet exhibited any of the energy and abilities of their father. The Sect is consequently diminishing in number and many families are yearly joining the next, or Ta'aīyuni, division".

Thus, the death of Dudu Miyān was an irreparable loss to the Fara'iḍī movement; and it was not until

1 Tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan. Also, it is said that all the relics of Haji Shari'at Allah and Dudu Miyan including many books and manuscripts were consumed by fire in this mishap.

2 See, *infra*, Chapter vii.

3 See, *Mawlana Karamat 'Ali : Huffat-i-Qatl*, pp. 94-97.

4 See *infra*, Chapter vii.

5 James Wise ; *Eastern Bengal*, p. 26. It may be noted that the *Ta'aīyuni*, is the religious reform movement of Mawlana Karamat Ali (see James Wise ; *Eastern Bengal*, p. 7, and for details see *supra*, Chapter II).

Naya Miyān attained to maturity that the movement regained some of its lost strength.

Dudu Miyān had, however, appointed one Munshi Faïd al-Din Mukhtār, his legal attorney in A.D. 1849, and authorised him to deal with all matters relating to his property.¹ On the eve of his imprisonment in A.D 1857, he had appointed his son-in-law, Bani Yāmīn Miyān of Barisal, his Mutawalli to look after his household affairs.² Besides, Du du Miyān was fortunate enough to have a learned theologian like Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār³ among his disciples, who usually acted as the Mufti of the Fara'idi, and whose profound knowledge in religious sciences amply compensated the lack of it in Dudu Miyān himself.⁴ During his life time these three persons acted as his representatives and personal envoys, and after his death they continued to help the family of Dudu Miyān and protect the Fara'idi movement from falling into disintegration. Thus, Dudu Miyān's confidence in them proved eventually to be a redeeming feature after his death. Moreover, Dudu Miyān had given a centralised hierarchical organisation to the Fara'idi Society.⁵ Despite all trials and tribulations, this organisation stood the ground, and proved itself to be the strongest prop to the Fara'idi movement.

1 See, J. A. S. P., Vol. vi, 1961, pp. 124—431.

2 Tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan.

3 See, *infra.*, Appendix "H".

4 See, the account of his debate with Mawlana Karamat 'Ali. *infra.*, Chapter vii.

5 See, *infra.*, Chapter viii.

**'ABD AL-GHAFUR *alias* NAYA MIYAN
(A.D. 1852–A.D. 1884)**

'Abd al-Ghafur *alias* Nayā Miyān, the second son of Dudu Miyān, was born in B.S. 1258¹/A.D. 1852, at Bihadurpur.² Our main source of information about him is the autobiography of Navin Chandra Sen, a prominent Bengali writer and a civil servant. He was posted as Subdivisional Officer at Madaripur (the home subdivision of the Fara'idī leaders), from A.D. 1879 to A.D. 1881.³ He was regarded as the first successful administrator of the area, and he himself claims that the secret of his success was his alliance with Nayā Miyān.⁴ He knew the Fara'idīs as well as their opponents very closely with whom he often had to deal with in his official capacity, and has left a detailed account of his dealings with them in his autobiography. The second source of our information is the Fara'idī Puthis. Besides, family traditions of the Fara'idīs have been utilised sparingly wherever found helpful.

His Early Life : Wazīr 'Alī records that Nayā Miyan's education started under his father.⁵ It must, however, be recalled that Dudu Miyān was imprisoned in A.D. 1857,⁶ i.e., at the fifth year of Nayā Miyān's age. This

1 Wazir 'Ali: *Muslim Ratnahr*, p. 9.

2 Bahadurpur is the native village of Dudu Miyan and of his descendants. It is in the Madaripur subdivision of the present Faridpur district.

3 Cf. Navin Chandra Sen: *Amar Jivan*, Calcutta, B.S. 1317, vol. iii, pp. 154 and 274.

4 Ibid., p. 154.

5 Wazir 'Ali *Muslim Ratnahr*, p. 10.

6 See, *supra*, Chapter IV.

opportunity, therefore, must have been short. Wazir 'Ali further says that, later on, a Peshawari Mawlawi was engaged for tutoring him¹. It appears from the current tradition that this Mawlawi stayed at Bahadurpur for a considerably long time, and Naya Miyan owed much to this Pathan teacher for his training and education.

We have mentioned earlier that Naya Miyan was elected leader of the *Fara'idis* in A. D. 1864. He was, however, too young to take the responsibilities of leadership on his own shoulder, and the *Fara'idis* were wise enough to appoint the three illustrious lieutenants of Dudu Miyan, namely Munshi Faid al-Din Mukhtar, Bani Yamin Miyan and Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbar, to act as his guardians. To their credit, they acted with singular devotion and remarkable harmony until the time their protege became capable of taking his responsibilities in his own hands.²

As a leader : The date of Naya Miyan's actual assumption of leadership is not known. But, in A. D. 1879, two remarkable incidents took place at Madaripur, viz., (i) a series of conflict between the Hindu zamindars and the *Fara'idi* peasantry ; and (ii) a religious debate or *bahath* between the *Fara'idi*s and the *Ta'siyunis*. On both these occasions, we find Naya Miyan moving enthusiastically at the head of the *Fara'idi*s. Navin Sen testifies that at

1 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 10. His actual name has not been mentioned and he was so much well-known as the Peshawari Mawlawi that his actual name is not remembered by the present day *Fara'idi*s.

2 Tradition current in the family of Naya Miyan and among the *Fara'idi*s at large.

at this time his leadership was well established among the *Fara'idi* community. He says, "Nayā Miyan is the son of the famous Dudu Miyan and the leader of the *Fara'idis*. A greater portion of the Muslims of Eastern Bengal, notably of Faridpur, are *Fara'idis*, who accept Nayā Miyan's words as divine revelation." He further adds, "in this region (*i. e.*, Madaripur) Nayā Miyan has established a State of his own within British regime."¹

In the interest of good administration Navin Sen had entered into an alliance of mutual help with Nayā Miyan.² This marked the beginning of a co-operative policy of the *Fara'idi* leaders towards the government administration. Once having entered into an understanding, Nayā Miyan kept his promise to the last, as Navin Sen himself says, "during my stay of two years at Madaripur, Nayā Miyan never broke his promise. This was one of the secrets of my success in administering Madaripur (subdivision)"³

Conflict with zāmīndārs of Palang: It may be noted that Madaripur (the native subdivision of the *Fara'idi* leaders) has a predominantly Muslim population and, according to Navin Sen, "all Muslims *ra'iyyats* of the area were the followers of Nayā Miyan.⁴ The biggest zāmīndāri of the area was held by the *Chakravartis* of Palang. In A. D. 1879, when Navin Sen took charge of Madaripur subdivision, a series of family intrigues brought the

1 Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan*, *op. cit.*, vol iii, p. 149.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

3 *Ibid.* : "আমি যে দুই বৎসর মাদারীপুরে ছিলাম, তিনি (নোয়া বি জি) এ প্রতিজ্ঞা করেন করেন নাই। আমার মাদারীপুর সুশাসনের ইহা একটি নিগৃহ তত্ত্ব।"

4 Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan*, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 142.

Chakravartis to the notice of the government. This incident also offers a good side view of their relations with the Fara'idis.

Navin Sen says that the large zamindari estate of Palang was held by three brothers, who were *Chakravarti Brahmanas*. "The eldest was good natured and peaceful, the middle was of a medium character and the youngest was so oppressive that he was known in that area as Kaimsāvatār," i. e. the incarnation of the infamous Kaimsa, the wicked uncle of Krishna. Although one of their cousins was legally, entitled to one half of the whole estate, the three brothers gave him neither the possession of any part of the zamindari nor assigned him any benefit thereof. This cousin tried his best to come to an understanding with them but all in vain, and at last, being exasperated, he decided to lease his legal title to the Fara'idi leader, Nayān Miyān¹.

When the plan of their cousin came to light, the three brothers felt deep apprehension ; for, Navin Sen says that the Fara'idi peasantry of the area were under the religious control of Nayān Miyān, who was "so powerful and so indescribably oppressive" that the above proposal made even the Kamsāvatār tremble. Still instead of making a compromise with their cousin they decided to dispossess him by foul means. They forged a document for the purpose, influenced the local Sub-Registrar got it registered by him secretly at dead of night. On complaint of their cousin, the District Magistrate Mr. Jaffery investigated the case personally and being convinced of the forgery, instituted a case against three brothers and the Sub-Registrar.²

1 Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan, op. cit.*, Vol. iii, p. 142

2 *Ibid.*

It was at this time that Navin Sen was appointed Sub-divisional Officer at Madaripur. On his appointment Mr. Jaffery apprised him of the situation and instructed him to try the case personally and to see that justice is done. Navin Sen tried the case, found the accused guilty, and according to the normal procedure, committed the three brothers to the Sessions. This was, according to Navin Sen, an obvious case and had created a good deal of sensation among the people. Every-body thought that these notorious oppressors would get their due this time. But to their utter surprise, they were acquitted by the Sessions Judge, which, the peo-
ple suspected could not have happened but for the conflict that exised between the Judge and the Magistrate.¹

On being released, the three brothers returned home in a triumphal mood, and the youngest, Kamsāvātar, began creating a havoc by his oppressions upon the peasantry who were mainly the Fara'idis. They appealed to the government for protection and filed numerous suits against the zamindars in the court of the Sub-divisional Officer. Everyday such suits multiplied. Navin Sen tried a selected number of these cases, found the zamindars guilty, and sentenced them to different terms of imprisonment. But, on appeal to the Judge's Court, the zamindars were acquitted. In the interest of good administration, Navin Sen then took a firm stand and began to try the rest of the cases against the zamindars. But, everytime he sentenced them, they were invariably released on appeal to the Judge's Court. This process went on for

1 Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan, op. cit.*, Vol. iii, p. 143.

about six months until all the charges against them were exhausted.¹

Things then took a serious turn. For, being confident on their triumph over their cousin, as well as over the peasantry and the civil administration, they held a gorgious celebration of their victory in one of the houses of their cousin, which they forcibly occupied on the plea that it then belonged to them and their agents did not hesitate even to put the suckling cow calves of the peasantry on auction to realise the arrear rents.²

According to Navin Sen the peasantry had no illusion that the government administration failed to protect them. They, therefore, took the matter in their own hands and circulated in the bazaars that since the District Magistrate and the Sub-divisional Officer could not deliver them from the oppression of the zamindars, they themselves would save the country by three of them going to the gallows after killing the three *Chakravartis*. Meanwhile, a band of agents (gomashthahs and piyādahs) of the zamindars were kidnapped from Palang and were carried away along with their boat, in which they used to pass their night as a measure of precaution. On this incident, the Police carried out an extensive search but no trace of them or of their boat was found. At the time of investigation, the Police were told that the local people had no knowledge of them; even they never saw the agents of the zamindars at any time. It was suggested by some, rather sarcastically, that those scourges may have been taken away by *Allar*

1 Navin Chandra Sen, *Amar Jivan*, op. cit., Vol. iii, p. 143

2 *Ibid.*

Dhil (more correctly *Allar Dhil* or the kite of God). This was as Navin Sen says a typical *Fara'idi* expression, indicating murder, and the Police had no confusion that they were murdered and drowned in the river Meghna. The Police were, however, helpless as it was impossible to elicit evidence from the *Fara'idis*.¹

This incident combined with the rumour of a conspiracy to murder them overwhelmed the landlords with fear and dismay ; and taking their families with them, they left for Faridpur town for safety. There they took refuge in the residence of Babu Tārnāth, the government pleader of Faridpur. The whole matter was thus settled, to the satisfaction of the *Fara'idis*, and also to the satisfaction of the government, as after this incident they offered to settle their dispute with their cousin amicably.²

If the above account of Navin Sen is true, and coming from a neutral and contemporary source, there is no reason why it should not be accepted, it leaves no room for doubt that Nayā Miyan had assumed his full responsibility much earlier than A.D. 1879. For, in A.D. 1879, he succeeded in regaining a good deal of the lost power and prestige of the *Fara'idi* movement.

Debate on Jut'ah : In A.D. 1879, Mawlāwī Hafiz Ahmad, the eldest son of Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī of Jawnpur, came to visit Madaripur and began to preach against the *Fara'idi* doctrines. This created great

1 Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan*. Vol. iii, p. 144. It may be noted that the phrase "আঘাতার চিন" (Kite of God) is widely known among the *Fara'idis*. Probably the word "চিন" in the text is a printing mistake for "চিন".

2 Navin Chandra Sen, *Amar Jivan*, Vol. iii. p. 145 f.

commotion among the public. At one stage, the situation threatened peace and order, and the matter came to the notice of the Police. Thereupon, Navin Sen intervened, and proposed a debate to be held at Madaripur on a specified date, in which fair chances would be given to both the parties to prove their points of view. This was accepted, and a debate was held at a public place under the supervision of the Police. Navin Sen called it *Jumār Yuddha* or the battle of *Jum'ah*. The debate was attended by about 5,000 men and lasted for 7 hours, from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. It, however, ended in a fiasco.¹

The proceedings of this debate are said to have been published in a Bengali *Puthi* called *Mujir Nāmā*.² Navin Sen's account gives an impression that *Nayā Miyān* was considerably well versed in religious sciences, and defended the *Fara'idi* doctrines with remarkable success. Considering the meagreness of his educational training, it may be suggested that he must have been greatly benefitted by his association with *Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbār*, who was at that time at the zenith of his fame as a learned theologian,³ and who, as we have mentioned above, had been one of the guardians of *Nayā Miyān*. In B.S. 1289⁴/ A.D. 1884, *Nayā Miyān* went on a pilgrimage to Makkah and died about six months after his return to Bengal at the age of 32.⁵ He was buried at Bahadurpur.

1 Navin Chandra Sen, *Amar Jivan*, Vol. iii p. 150 f.

2 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnahr*, p. 11. This work was not available to us.

3 See Appendix "H", and Chapter vii.

4 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnahr* p. 12.

5 *Ibid.*

KHAN BAHADUR SA'ID AL-DIN AHMAD
(A.D. 1855—1906)

On the death of Nayā Miyan in A.D. 1884, the third and the youngest son of Dudu Miyan Sa'īd al-Dīn Ahmad was acclaimed leader by the Fara'idiś. He was born in B.S. 1261¹/ A.D. 1855, at Bahadurpur. His education started at home under one Munshi Bahir al-Din² of Faridpur. Later on, he was sent to Dhaka for higher education, where he had the opportunity to study Islamic sciences under the then renowned philosopher Mawlāna Din Muhammad.³ When the Muhsiniyah Madrasah of Dhaka was started in A.D. 1874,⁴ he enrolled himself there as a student and prosecuted studies under Mawlāna Ubayd Allah 'Ubaydi⁵ for a considerable time. He got married at Dhaka and often lived there until the time of his election to the leadership in A.D. 1884.

As a leader: As the leader of the Fara'idi movement, he scrupulously maintained the policy of co-operation with the government, which was adopted earlier by his elder brother Nayā Miyan. In B.S. 1304⁶/A.D. 1899,

1 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 12.

2 Tradition current in the family of Sa'īd al-Dīn ; also supported by the tradition current in the family of his colleague in student life, Mawlāni Kafil al-Dīn Ahmad of Kamalapur in the modern town of Faridpur (see Appendix "G").

3 About Mawlāna Din Muhammad, see James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 94.

4 See, Munshi Rahman 'Ali Ta'ish : *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, A.D. 1910, p. 245.

5 Tradition current in the family of Sa'īd al-Dīn.

6 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 13.

the government of India conferred on him the title of "Khan Bahadur." His close relation with the British government appears to have caused some amount of suspicion among a section of the Fara'idis who although did not create any dissension within the movement, themselves gradually slipped out of it. When the question of the partition of Bengal came in A. D. 1905 he supported Nawāb Sir Salim Allāh Bahādur in favour of partition.¹ The policy of co-operation with the government was as a matter of fact, continued even by his successor Rāshīd al-Dīn Ahmad *alias* Badshāh Miyān down to B. S. 1319/A. D. 1913. i. e., until the European powers began to show all-out hostility against the Turkish empire.² The Fara'idis were completely disillusioned at the end of the World War I, when the European powers including the British, dismembered the Turkish empire and divided its territories among themselves. For, the Fara'idis regarded the Turkish Sultan as the rightful *Khalīfah* of the Muslim world.³ In B. S. 1328/A. D. 1922, Badshāh Miyān joined the *Khilafat* and the non-co-operation movement, and was arrested and imprisoned.⁴

During the time of Sa'id al-Dīn, the conflict between the Fara'idi and the *Ta'siyunis* had reached its climax, and religious debate (*bahāth*) between them had become a common-place occurrence in the towns and villages of Eastern Bengal. The main point of their difference revolved around the question of the legality of holding

1 Tradition current in the family of Sa'id al-Din.

2 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratanahar*, p. 18.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 18 19.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20

congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id*',¹ in the villages of Bengal. Accordingly, the Muslims of Faridpur and its neighbouring districts, where the *Fara'iidi* movement was strong, were divided into two factions known as *Jum'ah Wālā* or the supports of the Friday congregational prayer, and *Ba-Jum'ah Wālā* or those who opposed Friday prayer. In B.S. 1309/A.D. 1903 two debates were held on the question of *Jum'ah* at Dawud Kandi in the district of Tippera.² In the first debate Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār represented the *Fara'iidi* point of view and was opposed by one Mawlawi Yūsuf 'Ali.³ The *Fara'iidi Puthis* claim that the *Fara'iidi Khalifah* pushed his point of view successfully and proved before a large gathering that the prayer of *Jum'ah* was not lawfully permitted in the villages.⁴ The defeat of the supporters of Friday prayer on this occasion, led to a great commotion among them and they decided to hold a second debate, for which they invited many learned theologians of the time. One Mawlawi Muhsin of Jawnpur, a relative of Mawlānā Karamat 'Ali, who was then touring Eastern Bengal, also joined his hands with the opponents of the *Fara'iidis*. He actually paid a visit to the village of Matha Bhanga near Dawud Kandi and invited the *Fara'iidis* to meet him in a debate at Naya Kandi.⁵ But he is said to have withdrawn on the eve of the appointed day.⁶ The *Fara'iidis* proceeded to Dawud Kandi on the appointed day, headed by Khalifah 'Abd

1 Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, p. 123 f.

2 Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, pp. 126-33

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

5 Nazim al-Din - *Puthi*, pp. 111-119

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

al-Jabbār and Mawlawi Thana' Allah.¹ They were competent theologians and experienced in the art of debate, who succeeded to manipulate the situation in their favour and won the day.²

Khān Bahadur Sa'id al-Din Ahmad died in B.S. 1312/A.D. 1206, at Madhupur in Bihar, while on an excursion. His dead body was brought to this native village Bahadurpur and buried there.³

He was a kind hearted person, generous to his friends, and amiable to high and low. He was deeply read in Islamic sciences and was fond of learned discussion. In this respect he was singularly fortunate to have a group of learned theologians around him, like Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār, Mawlawi Thana' Allah, Mawlawi Kifil al-Din Ahmed⁴ and Mawlawi 'Abd al-Hayy.⁵

He was survived by three sons and two daughters.⁶ On his death, his eldest son Abu Khālid Rashid al-Din Ahmad *alias* Badshah Miyān succeeded him to the leadership of the Farā'idi movement, who is still living.*

1 About Mawlawi Thana' Allah, see Appendix H

2 Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, pp. 134-38, and Nazim al-Din : *Puthi*, pp. 107-20.

3 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 14.

4 About Mawlawi Kafil al-Din Ahmad see Appendix G.

5 About Mawlawi 'Abd al-Hayy see Appendix H.

6 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnagar*, p. 14.

* It is regretted that Badshah Miyan died on the 13th December, 1959, when this study was completed.

CHAPTER SIX

RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES OF THE FARĀ'IDIS

Since its inception down to the present day, the Farā'idi movement pursued a predominantly religious programme. The socio economic programme of Dūdu Miyān¹ gave added impetus to the movement and gained for it the support of the masses of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Although, its socio-economic aspect appears to have been most attractive to the mass of the people, its religious aspect was never underrated by its adherents.

As we have seen earlier, the Farā'idis identified themselves with the *Hanafi* school of law², to which the rest of the Muslims of Eastern Bengal and Assam generally belonged. There are, however, some peculiarities in the Farā'idi doctrines which distinguished them from the rest. A study of these religious peculiarities in the Farā'idis is of special interest to the students of history, because in the first place, it gives us a close view of the various problems—social, religious, economic and political—which were faced by the Muslims of Bengal after the loss of their political power ; secondly, because, as a type of religious reform movement, it connects Eastern Bengal with the historical trend of religious reform so common in the nineteenth century Muslim world.

In launching his reform programme, the foremost aim of Hājī Shari'at Allāh was to enforce the original teachings of Islam and to purge the society of

1 See *infra.*, Chapter VIII.

2 See *supra.*, Chapter II

various superstitious rites and ceremonies which were practised by the Muslim of Bengal. His first policy was to call upon the Muslims to be penitent for the past sins as a measure for the purification of the soul. This principle is known as the doctrine of *tawbah* or penitence. After this purification, he called upon them to observe strictly the *fara'id* or the duties enjoined by God and the Prophet. Thus, the doctrine of *tawbah* led naturally to the second step, namely the doctrine of *fara'id*¹, and it is on account of the great emphasis laid on this doctrine that the movement came to be known as *Fara'idī*. Thirdly, the doctrine of the Unity of God or *tawhīd*, as enunciated in the Qur'ān, was strictly enforced; and whatever beliefs or customs were found repugnant to it were to be given up. Fourthly, the *Fara'idīs* differed from other Muslims of Bengal on the question of holding congregational prayers of Jum'ah and Id; and fifthly, they denounced all popular rites and ceremonies which had no basis in the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition and abolished them unsparingly. These five principles of the *Fara'idīs*, are discussed below :

(i) *Tawbah*—According to Haji Shari'at Allāh, *Tawbah* means penitence for the point sin and a resolve to abstain from sinful act in future²; and the process of *tawbah* consists in administering a formula by the *ustād* (the spiritual guide) to the *shagird* (the disciple), both of them sitting face to face. The formula is as follows³ :

1 For explanation see *supr.*, Chapter II.

2 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22.

3 The formula is still in use, which runs as follows :

"I am repenting for whatever sin I have committed knowingly and willingly, in the form of ascribing God's partnership to any other (*shirk*), indulging in sinful innovation (*bid'ah*) disobedience (to God), injustice or oppression; and I am resolving that I shall continue to believe in the Unity of God (*tawhid*), and carry out His ordinances in so far as it lies in my power and lead my life in conformity to the tradition of the Prophet of God."

A person so initiated into the Fara'idi fold is called Tawbār Muslim (*i.e.*, a Muslim who has purified his soul by means of *tawbah*), or *Mu'min* (*i.e.*, a true believer), and enjoyed equal rights in all respects with the rest of the Fara'idis. The doctrine of *tawbah* is, in fact, the gate-way to the Fara'idi reforms, and the rest of the Fara'idi doctrines are reflected in the formula quoted above.

The process of administering *tawbah* is called by the Fara'idis "*istighfar*"¹, *i.e.*, seeking forgiveness from God. It is also called "*iqrāri ba'iyyat*", *i.e.*, taking oath by the Ustad from the *Shagird* orally without touching each other. This distinguishes the Fara'idi *ba'iyyah* from the other types of *ba'iyyah* administered by traditional Pirs (or the spiritual guides), in which they usually

“আমি আনিমা, ইচ্ছাম যে সমস্ত শেরক, বেদাত, নাফরমানি, অন্যান্য অভ্যাচার করিয়াছি—সমস্ত হইতে তওবা করিলাম এবং ওয়াদা করিতেছি যে আমাকে এক বলিয়া বিশ্বাস করি এবং তাঁর স্বাভৌম আদেশ ও নির্দেশ স্থাপন করিব এবং হজরত রহমানুজ্জাহ (স) এর সুন্নত উদ্দিক্ষা ঘোতাবেক চলিব।”

(Supplied to the present writer by Badshah Miyan, the last head of the Fara'idi movement).

1 The term "*Istighfar*" is derived from the Arabic verb "*ghafara*" which means "to forgive" (in the past tense). Being on the meter of *Istaf'ala*, *Istighfar* means to seek forgiveness.

lay their hands in the hand of the Murīd (disciple). Such physical contact between the Pīr and the Murīd is popularly believed to be designed for the transmission and diffusion of spiritual blessings from the former to the latter. The Farāidis denounce this latter kind of *ba'iyah* as sinful innovation or *bid'ah* and call it *dasti ba'iyah*; for, according to their belief, it has no basis in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah. On the other hand, they claim that *iqrāri ba'iyah* is based on the practice of the Prophet.

One significant point to be noted here is that the *tawbah* was administered by Hājī Sharī'at Allāh and his successors in Bengali language as against the general practice of the Pīrs to administer it in Arabic, Persian or Urdu.

The adoption of the formula in Bengali language was apparently to simplify and popularise this doctrine among the ignorant multitude who did not know Arabic, Persian or Urdu, or as Hunter says, "not one in ten of whom could repeat the *Kalima'*", i.e., the simple formula of the faith¹.

(ii) Fara'id.—The doctrine of fara'id or observance of obligatory duties as enjoined by Islam, is the central principle of the Farāidi reform programme from which it has derived the name itself. By the term "fara'id", Hājī Sharī'at Allāh meant all the duties enjoined by God and the Prophet as implied in the formula of *tawbah*. But he put special emphasis on the absolute necessity of observing the five fundamentals of Islam (*bīnā al-Islām*), which are (a) profession of *Kalimah* (the article of the faith), (b) five time daily prayers, i.e., *namāz* or *salāt*, (c) fasting during the month of Ramadān

¹ W. W. Hunter : *England's Work in India*. Madras, 1888, p. 47 f.

i.e., roza or sawm, (d) payment of zakât or poor-tax, and (e) pilgrimage to Makkah or hajj¹. In conformity to the Islamic injunctions, the first three are enforced on the rich and poor alike, while the last two are for the rich who alone can afford them².

We have in the *Farâ'idi Puthis* a good concept of Islam as believed by the Farâ'idis and the way they sought to improve the conditions of Muslims though the new principles. Durr-i-Muhammad compares the five fundamentals of Islam with the root, branch and flower of a tree in the garden of Islam, with humble-bee sucking the honey and the nightingale singing sweet melody. The rest of the religious duties or *Farâdi*, are, according to him like innumerable smaller branches and leaves of the tree which not only embellish it but accomplish its beauty and vitality. He is of the opinion that *Hâji Sharî'at* Allah's contribution to Islam in Bengal consists in revitalising the tree of faith (Iman) and in raising the garden of Islam into the vigour of a throbbing life as indicated in the above simile.³ Durr-i-Muhammad puts

1 Cf. Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnakar*, p. 32 f.; and Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, p. 11 f.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, pp. 11-12 :

সে পানি পাইল ষব্দে দরাত্ত ইমান তথে,

তাজা হৈল হকুমে আজ্ঞার ।

তৈয়ব কলেমা মেই ইমানের মূল সেই,

দিনে দিনে হৈল ওষওয়ার ।

রোজা যে বাগানের কলি নামাজ তাহাতে অলি,

আকাত বুনবুল খোশ লাহান ॥

হজ সে গাছের ডাল শুন যত নেক হাজ,

মালদার ষেই মোছলমান ।

এই পঁচ হৈতে যত দোশাথা তেশাথা কত,

দীন এহুমির খুবি হৈল ।"

utmost emphasis on this point, especially because Hāji Shāri'at Allāh found Islam in Bengal in a dying condition for the lack of the water of faith (imaner pāni) on his return from Makkah.¹ Curiously enough, Hunter also records the same opinion when he says, "a century ago [i.e., in the eighteenth century] Muhammadanism seemed to be dying of inanition in Bengal".² This sudden realisation of the sorry plight of Islam in Bengal apparently came after the loss of political power and showed clearly the superstition and corruption which had taken hold of the Muslim society.

Durr-i-Muhammad cautiously guards himself from ascribing any miracle to Hāji Shāri'at Allāh for the spectacular success of the Hāji in revitalising Islam in Bengal. Because, as a typical Farāidi, he sees the welfare of the universe in the rigorous operation of the divine law. Hence, he attributes Hāji Shāri'at Allāh's success to his right interpretation of Islam which is an embodiment of the universal laws, and to the right type leadership provided by the Hāji.

The Farāidis claim themselves to be Hanafi, and both in doctrinal and legal matters follow the Hanafi school of law³. In their observance of religious duties (farā'id) they have always been very strict. For instance, James Taylor, a contemporary of the Hāji, testifies that the Farāidis had the character of "being stricter in their morals than their other Mahommedan

1 Durr-i-Muhammad : *Pathi* pp. 10-12.

2 W. W. Hunter : *England's Work in India, op. cit.*, p. 47.

3 See *J. A. S. P.*, Vol. III 1959, p. 195 f.

"brethren".¹ The observance of the five fundamentals of Islam are especially enforced by the Ustād and his Khalifahs in every locality where the Fara'idis lived and irregularities are strictly censured.

(iii) **Tawhid or Unity of God**.... Hājī Sharī'at Allāh being the protagonist of an Islamic revivalism, laid emphasis on the necessity of going back to simple Quranic conception of the Unity of God or *tawhid*. This concept is included in the formula of *tawbah*. The doctrine of the Unity of God was, therefore, strictly enforced in the Fara'idi society and any belief or custom which was found repugnant to *tawhid* was abolished. The Fara'idi doctrine of the Unity of God, needs elucidation not only because the present day Fara'idis consider it as a separate tenet, but because the Fara'idis came into direct conflict with the traditional society on the interpretation as well as in the practice of this doctrine.

Hājī Sharī'at Allāh being anxious to impress his co-religionist with the real meaning of *tawhid*, had included various implications of this doctrine in the formula of the *tawbah*. Bent upon practising in the fullest measure what one professed, he was unable to satisfy himself with the conventional interpretations of the doctrine of *tawhid*, which stresses merely upon the belief in the Unity of God. He interpreted *īmān* or faith as founded on two pillars, *viz.*, (a) to believe in the Unity of God and to stick to it firmly in practice, and (b) to refrain from ascribing God's partnership to any other². Thus,

1 James Taylor : *Topography*, p. 248.

2 Nazim al-Din : *Puthi*, p. 3.

in his opinion tawhid was not only a theory but also a principle to be practised. Any belief or action which had the remotest semblance of infidelity (*Kufr*) polytheism (*Shirk*) or sinful innovation (*bid'ah*), such as subscribing money to or participation in Hindu rites and ceremonies, unusual reverence to the Pirs, the traditional fatiha and such other practices, was, therefore, declared as repugnant to the doctrine of tawhid.¹ In fact, this boldness of the Haji and his followers was the cause of much irritation in one section of the traditional society, and it eventually led Mawlana Karamat Ali to denounce Haji Shari'at Allah and his followers as "the kharijis of Bengal".² In order to prove his point the Mawlana argued that both the Fara'idis and the Kharijis regarded work ('amal) as a part and parcel of faith (imān). In a hand-bill (*ishtihār*) which the Mawlana circulated in Eastern Bengal about A.D. 1867, he says :³

"Because of the ignorance of the masses of Bengal notably of the masses of the towns of Dhaka, Faridpur and Barisal and their neighbourhood, and the unacquaintance of the multitude with their religion (Din), school of law (Madhab) and creed ('Aqā'id), and because of their inability to discern between faith (Imān) and work ('Amal), they have fallen into the trap of the Kharijis" [of Bengal, i. e., the Fara'idis].

Thus, the Fara'idi doctrine of tawhid can be characterised as a doctrine of puritanism which aimed at purging the Muslim society of un-Islamic accretions.

1 Nazim al-Din : *Puthi*, pp. 2-4,

2 Mawlawi Karamat Ali : *Hajjat-i-Qati'*, pp. 85, 87, 95 and 97,

3 See, *Dakhiran-i-Karamat*, vol. i, p. 108.

The following quotations from the contemporary and later writings will illustrate the point :

(a) James Taylor says :¹

They [the Faraidis] profess to adhere to the strict letters of the Koran, and reject all ceremonies that are not sanctioned by it.

(b) W. W. Hunter says :²

"The articles of faith on which he [Haji Shari'at Allah] chiefly insisted were the duty of the holy war (Jihad), the sinfulness of infidelity (*Kufr*), or introducing rites and ceremonies into worship (*Bid'at*), and of giving partnership to the One God (*Shirk*)."

(c) H. Beveridge observes that the Faraidi movement appears to aim at "a sort of primitive church movement, or return to the doctrine of Mahamed," and attempts to abandon "the superstitious practices which have gathered round the earlier creed by lapse of time and by contact with Hindus and other infidels".³

In this doctrine of tawhid, therefore, we find the closest resemblance, between the Faraidis and the Wahhabis of Arabia.⁴ In fact, this is one of the basic points which entitles them to be classified with the revivalist movements.

(iv) *Congregational prayers of Jum'ah and Id*—The most noticeable distinction between the Faraidis and other Muslims of Bengal is that the former suspended the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Id* under the

1 James Taylor : *Topography*, p. 249.

2 W. W. Hunter, ed : *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol iv, p. 399.

3 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakerganj*, p. 254.

4 See *supra*, Chapter II,

British regime in Bengal. These prayers were resumed by them *in the towns of the then East Pakistan*¹ only after independence in 1947. For, the Fara'idis think that in accordance with Hanafi law the congregational prayers are not permitted except in misr al-jāmi' i. e., in such a township where the Amir (or administrator) and the Qādi (or the Judge) are present; and the important point is that the Amir and Qādi must be appointed by a lawful Muslim Sultān. Thus, the misr al-jāmi' is a constituted township in this special sense. The Fara'idis, therefore, held that such constituted township did not exist in Bengal under the British regime.

The controversy over the legality of congregational prayers in India was not a Fara'idi innovation. It may be dated back to the period of Muslim Sultanate in Delhi. In A.D. 1344, a controversy revolved around the question, whether the congregational prayers could be lawfully held under an unrecognised Sultān. i. e., in the regime of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq who did not obtain the recognition of the 'Abbasid Khalifah of Cairo at that time. The contemporary historians record that in the same year the question arose in the reign of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq about the legal position of the Sultān, and after a good deal of controversy "Qutlugh Khān, the Sultān's teacher convinced the monarch that no monarchy could be lawful without a recognition from the Khalifah." Then the Sultān himself began to believe firmly that organised social or religious life was not lawful without the Khalifah's consent, and ordered that the congregational prayers of Jum'ah and two 'ids be kept in abeyance. These prayers were revived only

¹ See *Infra*, Appendix "I"

after he received a decree from the Khalifah recognising him as a lawful Sultan.¹

Among the Muslim jurists also the differences of opinion prevailed on the question of holding congregational prayers. In this second instance, the controversy centres round two important points, viz., (a) the presence of the Amir, i.e., Khalifah and in later times the Sultan or their representative : and (b) the status of the place, i.e., whether it is a *mîr al-jâmi'* or not. We have already seen the nature of the controversy relating to the presence of Amir and the other part of the controversy which relates to the definition of *mîr al-jâmi'* is discussed below :

In earlier times the jurists generally agreed that *mîr al-jâmi'*, is a prerequisite for holding congregational prayers.² But in their interpretation of the term "*mîr al-jâmi'*", they differ widely among themselves. Imām Shāfi'i defines it "as a habitat of 40 or more persons" on whom congregational prayers are obligatory. Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal is in full agreement with Imām Shāfi'i. Imām Mālik permits congregational prayers even in such localities where the inhabitants count less than 40.

1 Cf. I.H. Qureshi : *Sultanate of Dehli*, pp. 33-35 ; and "Facsimile of the Memoir of Muhammad bin Tughlaq" in Agha Mabdi Husain's *The Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughlug*, London, 1938 Persian Text at the end 2 fols : and English Translation, p. 174.

2 For instance Shaykh Burhan al-Din Marghinani opens the chapter on *Jum'ah* in his *Hidayah* (an authoritative text book of *Hanafi* law), with the following words :

"لا جمعة الا في سهر جامع او في مصلى المسجد ولا تجوز في القرى -"

Translation : *Jum'ah* is lawful only in *mîr* or in the neighbourhood of *mîr* and it is not permitted in the *qura* or villages (cf. *Hidayah*, Lahore, n. d., part i, p. 148).

The Hanafi jurists reject the above views, but still differ among themselves in their interpretation of *mîṣr al-jâmi'*. Imām Abu Yusuf defines *mîṣr al-jâmi'* as "a locality where the *Amīr* (the administrator) and the *Qâdi* (the Judge) reside, who enforce civil and criminal laws of Islam"¹. According to authoritative sources, the addition of the clause "who enforce civil and criminal laws", is purported to excluding those localities from the status of *mîṣr al-jâmi'* where these officers do not possess the authority to enforce *shâ'i'ah* or any part thereof². This view has also been ascribed to Imām Abu Hanîfah, though a different view narrated from him has been accepted generally as more representative of his views. According to this last narration, Imām Abu Hanîfah defines *mîṣr al-jâmi'* as "a locality where if all its inhabitants assemble in the biggest of its mosques they are not properly accommodated". In other words he means a considerably large number. According to a third report, Imām Abu Hanîfah defines *mîṣr al-jâmi'* as "a large township in which there are roads, lanes, market-places and many villages attached to it, and where the *wâli* (the governor or administrator) resides, who is able to administer justice and to protect the oppressed from the oppressor to whom the people (of the attached villages) turn whenever any calamity befalls them"³.

1 Shaykh Burhan al-Din Marghinani : *Hidayah*, *op. cit.*, p. 148 : and Allama 'Aini al-Hanafi : *Umdat al-Qari li-Sharhahih al-Bukhari*, part iii, p. 284.

2 See Shaykh Burhan al-Din Marghinani : *Hidayah* *op. cit.*, part i, p. 148, footnote (*Hashiyah*) nos. 6 and 7, by Mawlana Abd al-Hayy.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 148 see also foot note nos. 4 and 5 by Mawlana 'Abd al-Hayy ; and Allama 'Aini al-Hanafi *Umdat al-Qari li-sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, *op. cit.*, part iii, p. 264 f.

Moreover, the Hanafī jurists of the earlier times laid down six conditions which must be fulfilled for holding congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Id*, viz., (a) to be in miṣr al-jami' (b) presence of the Muslim ruler or his agent, (c) prescribed time for prayer, (d) delivery of *Khuṭbah* or sermon, (e) Jamā'at or congregation, and (f) access for all to the place of prayer.¹ As the first two conditions cannot be fulfilled except in a country ruled by the Muslims, the jurists held that congregational prayers were not obligatory on the Muslims living in Dār al-Harb i.e., a country ruled by non-Muslims.

After the occupation of India by the British the Muslim jurists were asked to give their decision on the status of India as to whether it continued in its previous status of Dār al-Islam (a country of Islam) or had relapsed into Dār al-Harb (country of the enemy). This problem was also linked with the question of holding congregational prayers : for, if it had relapsed into Dār al-Harb the prayer of *Jum'ah* could no longer be deemed obligatory on its inhabitants. The question of holding the prayer of *Jum'ah* was, therefore, revived in this subcontinent along with the question of the status of the country.

Hunter's description of the situation throws considerable light on this point. He says that when the administration of British India was gradually transferred from the hands of the Muslims to the British officers the minds of many pious Muslims were "greatly agitated touching the relation" which they should hold to the

1 Cf. Shaykh Burhan al-Din Marghinani ; *Hidayah*, *of. cit.*, pp. 248-251.

British Government. They consulted the highest religious authority of the time, namely Shah 'Abd al-Aziz of Delhi, who in response to their quires gave a legal decision (*Fatwā*) stating that when infidels get hold of a Muslim country and it becomes impossible for the Muslims living therein and in the neighbouring areas to drive the infidels away or to retain reasonable hope of ever doing so and the power of the infidels increases to such an extent that they can abolish or retain the laws of Islam at their pleasure and no one of the Muslims is strong enough to seize on the revenues of the country without the permission of the infidels and the Muslims no longer feel so secure as before—such a country is positively a *Dar al-Harb*, i. e. a country of the enemy.¹ This undoubtedly reflected the situation in Bengal during the last two decades of the eighteenth century.

When the British power was fully consolidated during the early decades of the nineteenth century, the decision of the Muslim jurists became, according to Hunter, less hypothetical and more explicit.² The highest religious authority of this later time, Mawlawi 'Abd al-Hayy, stated in a *Fatwā* that the empire of the Christians from Calcutta to Delhi and other provinces adjacent to Hindustan (i.e., north-west provinces of India) were all *Dar al-Harb*. For infidelity (*Kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*) "are everywhere current there and nor recourse is made to the laws of Islam" and whenever such circumstances "exist in any country, the country is *Dar al-Harb*".³

1 W. W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans* pp. 142-43.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

Hunter says that the above decisions bore practical fruit. "The *Wahhabis* whose zeal is greater than their knowledge deduce from the fact of India being technically a country of the enemy, the obligation to wage war upon its rulers." He adds, however, that the more enlightened section of the Muslims "while sorrowfully accepting the fact, regard it not as a ground of rebellion but as a curtailment of their spiritual privileges", and as such many devout Muslims refrained from attending the Friday prayers. Even some of the mosques refused to allow its performance¹. The fact that Hunter is not referring herein to the Fara'idis will be clear from the instances cited by him in support of his contention. He says² :

"Thus, the two most eminent Musalmāns of Calcutta in their respective walks of life, the late head Professor of the Muhammadan College (*i. e.*, Madrasah 'Aliyah) Maulvi Muhammad Wajīḥ and the late Chief of all the Muhammadan Law officers (the Kazi ul-Kuzat) Fazlur Rahman refrained from saying the Friday prayer. They accepted the position of India as Country of the Enemy as a curtailment to this extent to their religious privileges. But they lived as loyal subjects to, and honoured servants of, the British Goverment."

Thus, in the first case, the presence of a lawful Muslim ruler was in question for the permissibility of the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*; and in the second case, it was the status of the country, *i.e.*, Dār al-Harb, which induced a section of the learned circle to refrain from saying the prayer of *Jum'ah*. The Fara'idis,

1 W.W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans* pp. 142-43.

2 *Ibid*

however, do not lay so much emphasis on the question of the political status of the country, i.e., whether it is Dār al-Islām or Dār al-Harb, as they do on the question of the locality, i.e., whether or not it is a mīṣr al-jami' which virtually includes the condition requiring the presence of a lawful Muslim ruler or his agent. This point was clearly brought out during a debate between Mawlānā Kārāmat 'Ali and the Fara'idi Khalifah, 'Abd al-Jabbār, held in A.D. 1867 at Barisal. For, when the Mawlānā proposed to include the question relating to the status of India in the agenda of the debate, the Khalifah showed the greatest reluctance to discuss a problem of political nature : so that the point was dropped out of the agenda¹.

A Fatwā or legal opinion of the Fara'idis (which has been recently recovered by the present writer), has dealt elaborately with the problem of *Jum'ah*. This Fatwā opens with following question²:

"In the name of Allāh, the most Compassionate and Merciful. Is the prayer of *Jum'ah* permitted in the village of Bengal in accordance with the tradition of the Prophet (*Hadīth*) and Islamic Law (*Fiqh*), or not ? Please explain."

In their answer, the Fara'idi 'ulamā' make no reference to the status of India under the British rule, but go back to the old Hanafī school of jurists in order to prove that holding congregational prayer of *Jum'ah*

1 See, Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, p. 104 ff.

Fara'idi Iatwa (See supra, Chapter. 1). It reads :

"سؤال :- دبیر بنگالہ میں نماز جمعہ گاؤں میں جائز ہے یا نہیں احادیث اور فقہ مسوانی پیان کیجئے۔"

is not permitted in the villages (or qurā plural of qaryāh). In the Fara'idi Fatwā they quote from Allāma 'Aini. the well-known Hanafī commentator of saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, the following¹:

"The learned Doctors have differed in their opinion regarding such places where the prayers of *Jum'ah* can be held. Imām Mālik said, *Jum'ah* is obligatory on the inhabitants of a locality (*qaryah*) which has a mosque or a market in it. Imām Shāfi'i and Imām Ahmad said, 'every locality which is inhabited by 40 free men, who have come of age, are in sound brain, and permanently residing there, who do not leave that place for any other place in the summer or winter except for occasional necessity, the *Jum'ah* is obligatory on its inhabitants, all the same whether their residences are built of stone, wood, mud, bamboo or any other materials; only on one condition that their residences stand closely together. But if the houses lie scattered (in separate localities), *Jum'ah* is not lawfully permitted there. ... Imām Abū Hanifah holds the opinion that *Jum'ah* is not lawful except in misr al-jāmi 'or in its neighbourhood (musalla al-misr) : and it is not lawful in the villages (qurā)".

In the same Fatwā, the Fara'idi's contend that in the light of the Tradition of the Prophet (Hadīth) and of his

1 Compare 'Allama' Aini al-Hanafi: *Umdat al-Qari li-sharb Sahih al-Bankhari*, op. cit part iii, p. 264, reads :

"وأختلف العلماء في الموضع الذي تقام فيه الجمعة" فقال مالك كل فريه ليه
مسجد او سوق فالجمعة واجبة على اهلها (ولا يجب على اهل العمود وان كانوا الانهم
في حكم المسالرين) وقال الشافعى و احمد كل فريه فيها لربعون رجبلا امرار بالفرين
عقلاء متيبين بهالا يظلمون عنها صينا ولا شفاء الا ظلمن حابه" فالجمعة واجبة عليهم
وسواء كان البناء من حجر او حنطة او طين او قصب او غيرها بشرط ان تكون الابنية
ـ بقمعهـ "لأن كانت مكرفة" لم تصح... و مذهب ابي حنيفة" رضى الله تعالى عنه لا تصح
الجمعة الا لمن مصر جامع او قى مصلحة المصر ولا يجوز فى القرى -"

companions (*Athār al-Sahābah*), the opinion of the Hanafi school of law (*i.e.*, not permitting the prayer of *Jum'ah* in the villages), is sounder than, and preferable to other schools of opinions. The Fara'idi's then quote from the Tradition of the Prophet (S.M.) and his companions in support of their contention. After a lengthy discussion, they come to the following conclusions :

(a) *Miṣr al-jāmi'* in which alone the prayer of *Jum'ah* is permitted, "is a locality where the Amīr (the administrator) and the Qādī (the Judge), or else the Hakim (the Judge-administrator) reside". Therefore, such localities where they do not reside cannot be regarded as *miṣr al-jāmi'* and consequently, the prayer of *Jum'ah* cannot be lawfully held there."¹

(b) Speaking properly, there is no mosque at all in the majority of the villages of Bengal. "Even if there are a few Houses of Prayer, they cannot be regarded as mosques without being endowed for the purpose. How then these villages can be regarded as *miṣr al-jāmi'* ; and how can the prayer of *Ju'mah* be permitted there ? We take refuge with Allah from misunderstanding and prejudice".²

Thus, the arguments of the Fara'idi's centre round the definition of *miṣr al-jāmi'*, which, in their opinion, must be a residence of the Amīr and the Qādī or else of the Hakim in whom the functions of the Amīr and the Qādī

1 Cf. *Fara'idi Fatwa* (see supra., Chapter 1). It read s:

"مختصر تعریف یہ ہے کہ جہاں امیر و قاضی یعنی حاکم رہتے ہوں وہ جگہ شہر ہے"

2 Ibid , it reads :

"اور بنگال کے اکثر دیہاتوں میں اصل مسجد ہی نہیں ہے اگر کسی گاؤں میں دو ایک گھر مخصوص نماز کی لئے ہے تو وہ بھی بلا شرائیط وقف سب سبجد ہو نہیں۔ کتنے میں۔ پھر کہاں صر ہونا اور کیونکر جمعہ پڑھنا۔ نمودز بالله من سؤالنهم والتقصبه"

are combined. As neither the villages nor the towns of Bengal under the British, fulfilled these requirements in the technical sense (*i.e.*, through the delegation of authority by a lawful Muslim ruler), the Fara'idi's saw no justification in holding the prayer of *Jum'ah* under the British regime.

The traditional society, however, continued to hold the congregational prayers as usual despite the political changes taking place in the country. Hunter refers to them saying, "many Muhammadans who acknowledge the lapsed state of India, do not go so far as to deny themselves the consolations of the Friday service"¹. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali advocated in A.D. 1870, the status of Dār al-Islām for India, on the plea that under the British rule India was Dār al-Amān or a State of Security where civil and religious liberty was ensured². Even earlier in A.D. 1867, he appears to have regarded India as continuing in the previous status of Dār al-Islām and on that basis argued that the congregational prayer of *Jum'ah* was fā'iḍah or obligatory on the Muslims of India.³

Furthermore, Mawlana Karamat Ali pointed out that the prayer of *Jum'ah* was one of the biggest monuments of Islam⁴, which, therefore, must be carried out under

1 W.W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans* p. 143.

2 Cf. *Abstract of Proceeding of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta of a Meeting held at the Residence of Maulvie Abdool Luteef Khan Bahadoor on 23 November, 1870*, Lecture of Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali, p. 5 f. ; and W.W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans*, pp. 139-40.

3 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-'Qati'*, p. 104 f.

4 See, Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali's *Ishtihār*, in *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*, vol. i, Calcutta, A. H. 1344, p. 108.

all circumstances. The then lapsed state of India was, however, too obvious to be denied altogether, and the doubt in the permissibility of holding the prayer of *Jum'ah*, could not be easily dispelled. He, therefore, advocated that four *rak'at* of Zuhr prayer be added to the usual prayer of *Jum'ah*;¹ so that, even if the prayer of *Jum'ah* fell short of fulfilling the full spiritual obligation because of the lapsed state of the country, the prayer of Zuhr would, at any rate, repair the deficiency.

As a matter of fact, this last position, namely the addition of four *rak'at* of Zuhr prayer with the prayer of *Jum'ah* was not an innovation of Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī. This was advocated earlier by Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz. He was asked to give legal opinion (*fatwā*) with regard to "whether the prayer of *Jum'ah* in the regime of infidels obliterates the obligation of saying the prayer of Zuhr (as it usual in Dār al-Islām) or not"². Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz (A.D. 1746-1823) replied, "the older school of the Hanafī had made the permissibility of the prayer of *Jum'ah* conditional to the presence of the Sultān or his agent. The later school of the Hanafī at the time of Chingiz (Khāñ), however, gave the *fatwā* that when the infidels (holding the political power) appoint a Muslim governor in a town, he (*i. e.*, the Muslim governor) stands in the place of the Sultān; and the holding of the prayers of *Jum'ah* and 'Ids is permissible in his

1 See, Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī : *Miftah al-Jannat*, 3rd ed.. A.H. 1251, p. 159 f.

2 Cf. Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz : *Fatawa-i-'Azizi*, vol. i, p. 32 ; and vol. ii, p. 4 :

"سؤال :- صحت ادائے نماز جمعہ و سقوط فرض ظہیر در این زمان و در این مکان
چه حال دارد؟" "

presence. Because of the rise of the new situation they relaxed the rules proportionately". "It has been laid down in the *Fatwa-i-Alamgiri*", he continues, "that it is permissible for the Muslim to hold the prayer of Jum'ah under the regime of the infidels, and the Muslims have the right to appoint a *Qadī* by mutual agreement, but they must strive for a Muslim regime. But in addition to the prayer of Jum'ah four rak'at (of Zuhr prayer) are necessary by way of caution."¹

The Faraidis detested this new position of saying the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Zuhr* together and expressed their indignation against it, as accorded by, Durr-i-Muhammad. He says² :

"It [the prayer of *Zuhr* or *Akhtr-i-Zuhr* together with that of *Jum'ah*] has no root in the *mudhab*; rather some of the theologians of the later time have invented it on account of their doubt about the permissibility of saying the prayer of *Jum'ah* secretly at their private homes".

1 Cf. Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz : *Fatawa-l-Azizi*, vol. i, p. 32 ; and vol. ii, p. 4 :

"جواب :- محنت ادائی نماز جمعہ نزد قدماء حنفیہ مشروط سلطان یا نائب سلطان است
متاخرین ایشان در عهد چنگیزیہ تزویی دادند یا انکه مرگہ از طرف کفار والی مسلمان
دو شہر مستکن باشد او حکم سلطان دارد والیت جمعہ واعیاد از وکیل صحیح است و کسانیکہ
متاخر تر پیدا شدند از این قدر ہم توسع کر دند۔ فی العالمگیریہ بلاد علیہا وابہ
کھلہ بیوز للسلیمان اللہ العصی و پیغمبر القائمی کا اپنا بترانی مسلمین جو چوبیہ علیہم
اپنے یلتتسوا والیا سلیما... بالوجیہ لدائی چہلہ رکعت علی سبیل الامتحان فخرور است
واقعہ اعلم۔"

2 Cf. Durr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, p. 41 :

"ولبس لها اصل في المذهب والما و معها بعض المتأخرین عند الشك في صحته
البعض في البيت مخفياً..."

The Farā'idi also detested the general practice of holding the prayer of *Jum'ah* in the villages. For, they equated the villages of Bengal with the Arabian *qaryah* as opposed to *mīṣr* or town ; and held that the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id* were not only unlawful but near prohibited (*makruh taḥrimah*) in the villages of Bengal¹. In the above mentioned Farā'idi Fatwā, the Farā'idi's singled out the Ahl-i-Hadīth for criticism on this point. It reads² :

"But the new sect, whose adherents do not follow any particular Imām, and claim themselves to be Ahl-i-Hadīth, hold the prayer of *Jum'ah* in every place without distinction."

The above discussion clearly shows that the Farā'idi's were not in the tradition of the reform ideas disseminated by Shah Wali Allāh and his successors ; whereas the Tariqah-i-muhammadiyah, Ahl-i-Hadīth and the Ta'aīyuni belonged, in one way or another, to the reformist tradition of the Shāh. The doctrine of *Jum'ah* being one of the cardinal points of the Farā'idi movement, it is also difficult to establish a link of the Farā'idi trend of reform either with the Wahhābī tradition of Arabia or, as H.A.R. Gibb suggests, with the *Salafiyyah* movement of Egypt³. The main source of its inspiration may, therefore, be sought in the indigenous soil, which demands an examination of the

1 Cf. Durr-i-Muhammad : *Purhl*, p. 81.

2 *Farā'idi Fatwa* (see supra., Chapter I), It reads :

"عَلَوْ، اسکے غیر مسلمین کا جدید فرقہ بنام اهل حدیث ائمہ کو مشہور کرنے ہیں
اُن انتہا میں مکن مرجکہ کیف مانافق جمعہ ادا کرنے ہیں -"

3 H.A.R. Gibb : *Mohammadanism*, 1955 ; p. 138.

contemporary events in Bengal against which the Farā'idi doctrines had developed.

We have seen that the main objection of the Farā'idi's to the congregational prayers in Bengal is that the presence of Amir and the Qādi which was a necessary condition for holding those prayers, was missing. In the pre British Muslim administration the Qādi had many important functions to perform besides his normal function of the administration of justice. For, being the custodian of the sharī'ah or Islamic law and morality, his assistance and supervision were indispensable to the Muslim community. The administrative changes which were brought about by the British during the half of the eighteenth century and after, had curtailed the powers and privileges of the Qādi drastically, with disastrous effect on the Muslim community.

James Wise observes that prior to the British occupation of Bengal, the Qādi was the spiritual leader of the Muslims who, although was appointed by the Nawab, was subordinate only to the Qādi al-Qudrat of Dehli. He administered the law, superintended the education of the Muslim children, expounded the orthodoxy of religion to the Muslims and resolved all religious disputes. Evenly scattered throughout the country were his Na'ibs or assistants, "who watched over the spiritual welfare of the Muslims, instructed them in faith and suppressed dissent or profession of independent thought". The power of the Qādi was great and "was equally dreaded by the monarch and the people". "In 1765, when the Diwāni passed into the hands of the East India Company", continues Wise, "a great change took place". The Qādis still served but deprived of

their power, and no longer a terror to evil-doers. They became "judical officers without any authority as religious instructors, or arbitrators".¹ The importance of the position of Qādi and his assistants in the then Muslim social system is further seen in Hunter's reference to the accusation of the Muslims of Bengal against the British regime. He says, "they accuse us of having brought miseries into thousands of families by abolishing their law officers, who gave the sanction of religion to the marriage tie, and who from the time immemorial have been the depositaries and administrators of the Domestic law of Islam. They accuse us of imperilling their souls by denying them the means of performing the duties faith".²

Examined in the tenor of above evidences, it appears that the Fara'idi doctrine of non-permissibility of the congregational prayers was not only a doctrine for doctrine's sake, but implied a protest against the administrative changes brought by the British to the detriment of the Muslim society and to the utter disregard of the Muslim sentiment. The specific mention of the Amir, Qādi and Hākim by them, in this connection lend further support to this view.

As a matter of fact, the question of the status of India had equally agitated the Muslim mind in the middle of the eighteenth century, when the Marhattas overran the Mughal empire. But, in the words of Hunter, "as the Marhattas satisfied themselves with taking one-fourth of the revenue (*Chauth*), without further interfer-

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 21

2 W. W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans*, p. 148.

ing with the actual administration". India was regarded as continuing in the status of Dār al-Islām ; and the learned Doctors of the time gave fatwā in favour of continuing the normal social and religious life. With regard to the British regime Hunter himself admits, "not one of the reasons here assigned [i.e., in the case of Marhattas), for India continuing a Country of the Faithful holds good at the present day"¹.

This point (i.e., the protest of the Fara'idis), is further illustrated by a remark of Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbār in course of his debate with Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī at Barisal in A.D. 1867. During this debate it was suggested by a theologian on the basis of a Makkan fatwā that if the Muslims of a locality under the British regime and British administration, appointed an imām to lead them in prayer, the prayer of *Jum'ah* could be lawfully held. Thereupon, addressing the Kutwāl of the town (a Police Officer), the Khalīfah replied, "if we appoint an Imām you would put handcuffs on our hands."²

Thus, the reluctance of the Fara'idi khalīfah to discuss the status of India in the debate, referred to above, was probably due to his fear of the British power and his unwillingness to come in conflict with that power rather than indifference or confusion of the Fara'idis with regard to the status of India. In fact, the suspension of congregational prayer itself implies that they

1 W. W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans*, p 137.

2 Mawlawi Karamat 'Alī : *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, 137 f.

"عبدالجبار نے کوتواں شہر کی طرف مخاطب ہو کے کہا کہ اگر ہم امام ستر کر دیں تو آپ ہاتھ میں مٹھکڑی ڈال دینگے۔"

assumed Indo-Pakistan subcontinent under the British rule to be Dar al-Harb.

(v) *Denunciation of Popular Rites and Ceremonies*—We have seen in the doctrine of *tawbah* that the Fara'idi's are required to part with shirk, bid'ah and all kinds of un-Islamic practices. This puritan attitude of the Fara'idi's is further emphasised in the doctrine of *tawhid*, which demands abstention from indulging in any belief or practice antagonistic to the doctrine of the Unity of God. Naturally, Haji Shari'at Allah abolished numerous customs, usages, rites and ceremonies, and not a semblance of *Kufr*, shirk or bid'ah, was left untouched. The contemporary and later sources are replete with lists of vice of every description that were condemned by the Haji, and abolished from the Fara'idi circle.

James Taylor records that the Fara'idi's rejected the rites of Puttee, Chuttee and Chilla, which were performed between the first and the fourteenth day after the birth of a baby, and observed only the rite of 'aqiqah or the naming ceremony which is in conformity with Islamic injunction, and which consists of sacrificing two he-goats for a male baby and one for a female baby for the entertainment of friends and relatives. He further records that the ceremonies on the occasions of shaving the child's head, marriage and funerals were simplified and divested of all un-Islamic customs and formalities, such as shabgasht procession of the wedding, and various fatihahs connected with the funeral¹.

1 Cf. James Taylor : *Topography*, pp. 249–50. It may be noted that "Chuttee" is correctly *Chati*, and Chilla" apparently corresponds to *Asauchi Ghar*, for the description of which, see James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 50-52. Fatihah is a rite for the remembrance of dead ancestors (see *supra*., Chapter ii, Section B).

Enumerating the purges made by Haji Sharī'at Allāh Durri-Muhammad says¹ :

"It was the custom of the Mushrik² to float the Bhera³ on the water, in the name of Khawaj.

The Mushrik Ganyar used to build shrines of Ghazi Kalu⁴ and worshipped them.

They used to worship the shrine of Bibi Fātimah⁵ and many held twelve Pujas in twelve months (of the year)⁶.

Dance, music and Fatihah (and other) rites and ceremonies of the Mushrik and many *Bid'at* were theirs ;

(Such as) witnessing the Da'shra, *Ratha* Yatra, and *Charak* Puja, and the worship of saints".?

He adds further :⁸

"Weeping and the holding of Zari in commemoration

1 Durr-i-Muhammad *Puthi*, p. 27.

মোস্তকগবের কাম ছিল কামে কামে ॥ খোয়াজের ভেড়া ভাসাইত জনে ।
গাজী ও কালুর দর্গা । করিত তৈয়ার ॥ পূজিত তাহাকে যত মোশরেক গাওয়া ।
বিবি ফাতেমার দুগা । পূজিত যতনে ॥ বারমাসে বার পূজা দিত জনে জনে ।
নাচ বাদ্য রহম ফাতেহা মশরেকের । আর যত বেদাত আছিল তাহাদের ।
দশহরা রথ বাজা চরক দেখিত ॥ গীরের নামেতে পূজা জনে জনে দিত ।"

2 The Arabic term "Mushrik" means one who gives partnership to God. But in this passage this term is applied to the corrupt Muslims.

3 For description, see James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 12 f.

4 Two popular Muslim saints, see, *ibid.* pp. 13—14.

5 See *ibid.*, p. 9.

6 The Hindus are said to have twelve or thirteen Pujas in twelve months some instances of which are given below in the passage such as *Dasehra*, *Ratha* Yatra, etc.

7 See description in James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 11.

8 Durr-i-Muhammad ; *Puthi*, p. 27.

of the martyrdom of Hasan and Husayn¹, were the custom of the Mushrik.

(They) raised the Makam of Panch Pir², and held ceremonial fast.

On the occasion of first menstruation they planted banana trees around the residence.

All these Bid'at were abolished (by the Hāji), and the sun of Islam rose high on the sky.

Having arrived there Hāji Sharīat Allāh propagated religion throughout Bengal".

Although the Fara'idis carried out sweeping reforms (as it is evident from the above quotations) without much let or Hindrance³, yet their laying of hands on a few time-honoured institutions relating to Pirism, caste prejudices and employment of *Dai* or midwife, evoked considerable opposition from a section of the traditional society.

(a) *Pirism*: We have seen earlier that Hāji Sharīat Allāh was initiated into the Qādiriyah order of sufism by his teacher Tāhir Sombal. He regarded mysticism

“মহরমে এয়াম হাচেন হোচেনের ||
 হায় হায় আরি ছিল মশরেকগনের।
 পাচ পৌরের নামেতে ঘোকাম উঠাইয়া।
 উপবাস করিণ্ড সে সকলে মিলিয়া।
 প্রথম হায়েজ মদি হইত কাহার।
 কলাগাছ গাড়িত বাতীর চারি ধার।
 সে সব বেদাত এবে হইল মেছমার।
 উঠিল এছলামি সুর্য় গগণ যাবার।
 হাজি শরিফতুল্লা হেথা তলরিফ আবিষ্ঠা।
 দীন জারি করিসেন বাজানা জুড়িয়া।

1 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 9

2 See *Ibid.*, p. 17.

3 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal* p. 22.

as a branch of higher religious knowledge, and held that in order to be able to tread on the mystic path a person must be well conversant with the shari'ah (Islamic law) as well as with tariqah (the science of mysticism) : because an initiate would otherwise be perpetually in danger of falling a victim to temptation and allurement, which might ultimately lead him astray. The Hājī, therefore, made a distinction between the khawāṣ (the select) and the 'awām (the commoners), and permitted only the former to be initiated into mystic orders¹, the latter were, on the other hand, encouraged recite from the Qur'an regularly.

Bent upon eradicating all practices which directly or indirectly conflicted with the pure monotheism (tawḥīd) of Islam, the Hājī denounced the then prevalent practice of regarding the pir (the mystic guide or master) as an intermediary between God and man². He defined the pir-murid (master-disciple) relationship, as one of teacher (ustād) and student (shāgrid), and pleaded that the terms "ustād" and "shāgrid", which "did not suggest complete submission", should be used in place of "pir" and "murid"³. He further alleged that the term "pir" had through corrupt usage, acquired an air of demigodness and had lost its real significance in the wilderness of corrupt and superstitious practices that

1 See the argument of Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbar to this effect, in Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat al Qati'*, *op. cit.*, p. 104 f.

2 This degraded state of Pirism in Eastern Bengal, has been fully described by James Wise in his *Eastern Bengal*, pp. 10-20 ; and by Mawlana Karamat 'Ali in his *Muqamī' al-Mubtadi'in* (see, *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*, vol. ii, pp. 177-200), and in *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat* (see, *Ibid.*, vol. I, 13 f.)

3 See James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22.

had gathered around the names of many real as well as legendary pīrs¹. He, therefore, deemed it necessary to dispense with this term altogether.

Hājī Shari'at Allāh had also denounced the custom of holding 'urs or the death anniversary of pīrs², as, it was in reality a fātiḥah, which he viewed as a *bid'ah* (sinful innovation). With regard to the initiation ceremony, the Hājī disapproved the practice of laying the hand of the ustād or pīr in that of the disciple. This subject later on figured prominently in a debate between Mawlānā Karamat 'Ali and Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbar, and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

(b) *Caste Prejudices*: Probably, due to the presence of an overwhelming majority of Chandāls or *Nama-Sudras* among the Hindu population of Faridpur and Bakarganj, who were despised, segregated and often tortured by the caste Hindus, the practice of untouchability, and racial discrimination had been, until very recently, the dominant feature of the Hindu society of Faridpur, Jessoré and Bakarganj³. Some sort of these discriminatory prejudices appear to have also been contacted by the Muslims from their Hindu neighbours, and the *Sayyies*, *shaykhs*, *Pathāns* and the *Mullāhs* occupied a position in the Muslim society of Faridpur which is not unfavourably comparable to that of the high caste Hindus. Among them the *Sayyids* of Girda and Gopalganj, the *Khundkars* of Gotti, the *Chowdhuris* of Gobra, Belgachi, Khanpura, Kartikpur and Habiganj, and finally

1 See instances in *ibid.*, pp. 10-20.

2 See *supra* Chapter ii.

3 Cf. L.S S. O'Malley; *Bengal District Gazetteers, Faridpur*, pp.

46 47.

the Qādīs of Gopalpur and Baghdanga are known for their hereditary high tradition¹. On the other hand, the Julahā (weaver), Beldār (digger), Nikāri (fish monger), Kulu (oil grinder), Kāhār or Chākar (*Palki* bearer and pānkā puller), and the Dai (midwife), who formed exclusive castes², were discriminated by other Muslims. For instance, O'Malley gives an account of "a peculiar class of Muhammadans called Chaklai Musalmans who were "practically ostracised by other Muhammadans", because some of their ancestors were said to have committed the offence of selling fish in the open market or to a group of fishermen³. Beveridge tells us that the Muslims of Bakarganj were fond of talking about their caste, and that, there were several subdivisions among them. He gives one example of "Chakars (servants)" who were "Palki bearers and Pankah pullers", and who lived in considerable number near Barisal, and who were looked down upon by other Muslims⁴. Describing the population of Dhaka city, James Taylor, a contemporary of Hāji Sharī'at Allāh, says,⁵ "several of the communities into which the lower classes of the Mahomedans are divided, according to their occupations and employments, have assumed the character of castes, and in regard to marrying and eating with each other they are quite exclusive as the Hin-

1 Information collected from local people during a tour in
.D. 1957.

2 See, the list of Muslim caste of Faridpur in Appendix "A"
p. 320

3 L. S. S. O'Malley : *Berital District Gazetteers, Jessore*, p. 44 f.

4 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj, op. cit.*, p. 255 f. They
are also called "Kahar".

5 James Taylor. *Topography*, p. 244.

doos". James Wise says that the Muslims of Bengal "have followed in many respects the system of caste as practised by the Hindus, although the principle that a son must carry on the trade or occupation of his father has never been reduced to a formula"¹. These evidences show that some amount of discriminatory prejudices had existed among the Muslims, in some form or other.

The Fara'idi reformer, Hāji Shari'at Allah viewed the existence of social discrimination among the Muslims with grave concern and denounced it as a deadly sin ; because, in his opinion such practices were contradictory to the spirits of the Qurān. He emphasised on the equality of all Muslims and held that the Fara'idis or the Tawbar Muslims, who have submitted most humbly to the will of God, repented for their past sin and resolved to lead a more godly life in future², could not be subjected to the unequal treatment or discrimination either among themselves or in the outside society. In fact, by dint of their fuller submission to God, the Fardaidis had a better claim to social or humane privileges if there were any, over the Riwajis of those who followed the traditional customs and superstitions. This declaration of equality appears to have borne good fruits, as it attracted the teeming multitude of the lower masses, consisting of the illiterate peasantry, the weavers (Julahas), oil-grinders (Kulus) and such other Muslims of Dhaka, Faridpur, Jessore and Bakarganj to the Faraidi movement. The fact that Hāji Shari'at Allah was proverbially reproached by his

1 James Wise. *Eastern Bengal*, p. 34.

2 See *ibid*. p. 22.

opponents as the Pir of the Julāhā" জোলার পীর¹ and that the Faraidis were generally called "the sons of Julāhā" জোলার পোমা², are, therefore, not without significance ; especially, as we now know, that the Hāji was son of a Talukdar (*i.e.*, a petty land-holder)³, and not the son of a Julāhā or weaver as claimed by James Wise⁴. According to the current tradition among the Fara'idis, the Hāji, at first, changed the family titles of the Julāhas and the Kulus to Kārigar (technician), he called those who could read the Qur'ān and had some knowledge of the fundamentals of religion, as "Mullah" : but later on the Fara'idis were encouraged to drop their family titles altogether. The fact that in the census of A.D. 1872, out of the total 588,522 Muslims of Faridpur 574,740 registered themselves as "unspecified" Muslims, and that, 142 Muslim weavers registered as "Kārigar" against 6,036 of the same caste who registered as "Julāhā",⁵ lend support to the above tradition.

(c) *The Employment of the Dai Caste* : The census of A.D. 1872 lists the *Dais* of Faridpur as an exclusive caste of the Muslims. James Wise says that the women-folk of this caste were professional mid-wives, but their number, compared to the great demand of their service was very small⁶. The profession of *Dai* was, however,

1 Tradition current at Faridpur.

2 See *supra.*, Chapter IV.

3 See Chapter III ; also J. E. Gastrell: *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, p. 36, no. 151, in which he admits that the Hāji possessed a small ancestral estate.

4 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22.

5 See, appendix "A".

6 See, *ibid.*, where only 195 Dais are recorded against the total Muslim population of 588, 522 of the district of Faridpur. See also James Taylor : *Topography*, p. 263.

considered low, especially because of the stigma attached to the "cutting of the navel cord" of a new born child. James Wise says that a common term of abuse applied to midwife is "Nar kata" or the cutter of the cord.¹ No respectable Hindu or Muslim would, therefore, cut the navel cord, even if they performed other services relating to the delivery, in a case of emergency.

The Fara'idis held that this prejudicial practice was contracted by the Muslims from their Hindu neighbours², and was, therefore, a sinful innovation or *bid'ah*. The prejudice against cutting the cord is said to have brought untold hardship to bear upon the mothers ; for owing to the scarcity of *Dai* women, notably in the district of Faridpur, the mothers had often to wait for a day or more for the arrival of the *Dai* and to have the navel cord severed. Haji Shari'at Allah protested against the exclusive employment of *Dai* for midwifery, and declared that there was nothing low in cutting the navel cord, and advised that this might be done by an elderly woman of the family or of the village, and if needs be the father of the baby ought to do it. This raised a considerable opposition from the traditional society, which was later on espoused by Mawlana Karamat 'Ali in his debate with Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbar, as will be seen in the next chapter.

(d) *The Dress of the Fara'idis* : The manner of the dress of the Fara'idis, had drawn considerable attention of the English writers, and may be briefly noticed here.

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 50.

2 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal* p. 22.

Hājī Sharī'at Allāh had advised his followers to wear *Pajama* or *Lungi* instead of wearing *Dhuti*, the national dress of the Hindus, which was, however, generally used by the Muslims of Bengal at that time. He pointed out that the *Pajama* and *Lungi* were more convenient for the daily prayers. It was, however, conceded that if anybody wore *Dhuti* for necessity, he should wear it plainly without passing one end between the legs¹ so as to avoid inconvenience at the time of prayer. It is a curious fact that this peculiarity of the Fara'idi mode of wearing the *Dhuti*, not only attracted the attention of the Englishmen,² but roused considerable suspicion in their minds. For instance, Hunter observes, "externally a Fara'idi may be known by the fashion of wrapping his *dhuti* or waist cloth round his loins without crossing it between his legs, so as to avoid any resemblance to a Christian's trousers"³.

It is needless to point out that the *Pajama*, the Muslim dress has the greatest resemblance to what Hunter calls "Christian trousers", in comparison to which the resemblance of *dhuti* with trousers cannot be judged anything but fictitious. As a matter of fact, this measure was taken by the Hājī to ensure that his disciples keep their thigh covered with dress in accordance with Islamic morality.

1 For wearing the *Dhuti* in the above manner, the *Fara'idis* were called "Kachha Khula" See *supra*, Chapter iv.

2 See H. Beveridge : *Bakarganj*, p. 255 ; W. W. Hunter, ed. : *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. iv, p. 399 ; and L. S. S. O'Malley : *Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, p. 210.

3 W. W. Hunter, ed. : *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, p. 399.

Thus, it may be concluded that the Fara'idi's adhered to the Hanafi school of law to which almost all Muslims Eastern Bengal still belong. As such, they followed the doctrinal and legal systems of the Hanafi school. Hence, in the strict sense, they did not have any principal difference with the rest of their neighbours. The above peculiarities which distinguished them from the rest of the Muslims of Bengal were due to their insistence on puritanism and strict observance of religious tenets especially in an age so well-known for laxity and corruption.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TA'AIYYUNI OPPOSITION TO THE FAR'AIDI MOVEMENT

It may be recalled that the nineteenth century religious reform movements, *i.e.*, the Farāidi, the Ta'aiyuni, Ahl-i-Hadīth and Patna school struggled side by side and competed with one another in their common Pursuit of winning over the *Sabiqis* or the followers of local customs to their respective doctrines. Hence there was occasional conflict among them. Moreover, though all these reform movements rejected the superstitious customs and ceremonies of the *Sabiqis*, yet the Ta'aiyuni, unlike others, appears to have stood for moderation and detested all kinds of radicalism that were characteristic of the Farāidi, Patna school and Ahl-i-Hadith. The Ta'aiyuni leader Mawlana Karamat 'Ali made scathing criticism of the superstitious beliefs and practices of the traditional society on the one hand, and of the radical approaches of the Fara'idi, Patna school and Ahl-i-Hadith on the other.¹ Nevertheless, the Mawlana approved in a modified form, some of the traditional ceremonies, such as, Fatihah (a rite for the dead), and Qiyam (or standing) in the birth day celebration of the Prophet (Milad), which were rejected by the three other groups, and wrote several books and pamphlets in vindication of these practices².

1 For Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's criticism of the traditional customs, see his *Haqq al-Yaqin*, *Maqamī' al-Mubtad'in* and *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat* published in *Dhaknirah-i-Karamat*. vol. I, Calcutta, A. H. 1344 ; and for his criticism of the reformists see *supra*. Chapter II.

2 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali's *Qurwāt al-Imān* and *Haqq al-Yaqin* may be cited under this category.

Naturally, the upholders of the traditional customs regarded Mawlana Karamat 'Ali as a champion of their own cause. An examination of the Ta'aifyuni opposition to the Fara'idi movement is, therefore, important, not only for its own sake, but also because of the fact that the objections of the traditional society to the Fara'idi movement are reflected in it.

Although Mawlana Karamat 'Ali met Haji Shari'at Allah in A.D 1836-37, the Farā'idis and the Ta'aifyunis do not appear to have come into direct conflict until A.D. 1839. According to the Mowlana's own account, he saw the Haji for the first time in A.H. 1252 (A.D. 1836-37), at the Gol Patti Masjid of Calcutta. They had a brief conversation and soon they came to grips. The Mawlānā says that he proposed to the Hāji for a public discussion of several controversial points, to which the Hāji did not agree and fled at night¹. From the Mawlānā's account of the meeting, it, however, appears that the topics discussed were of general nature having nothing to do with the Faraidi doctrines,² yet henceforward the relations between the two leaders were marked with growing antagonism.

Mawlana 'Ali came to Calcutta from Jawnpur for the first time in A. H 1250 (A. D. 1835) and remained in Bengal for a period of 18 years, i.e., down to A.D. 1853. During this period, he visited many districts including Dhaka, Faridpur and Bakarganj.³ the zone of the Farā'idi influence. In Muslim Ratnahr Wazīr 'Ali

1 Mawlana Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat i-Qati'*, pp. 85-86.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Mawlana Abd al-Batin : *Sirat-i:Mawla Karamat 'Ali Jawn-puri*, Ilahabad A.H.1368, p. 53.

mentions that the Mawlana had collided with the Fara'i-dis in B.S. 1245 (A.D. 1839), which falls in the last year of Hājī Sharī'at Allāh's life.¹

Thus, although there is a probability of the Mawlānā's second meeting with the Hājī, such a meeting, in fact, did not take place. For, after describing his first meeting with the Hājī at the Gol Patti mosque, the Mawlānā places his meeting with Dudu Miyan next and says that he met the Miyan at the residence of Qādī Shafī al-Dīn of Barisal on one Thursday,² without specifying the date. According to the Fara'idi popular tradition such a meeting had taken place during Dudu Miyan's last stay at Dhaka (A. D. 1860-1862) whence he proceeded to Barisal, the headquarters of Bakarganj district, to meet the Mawlānā. This approximation is quite probable, for after a short absence from Bengal in A. D. 1853, the Mawlānā had returned to his missionary activities in Eastern Bengal and Assam for a second time. He says, "this humble person has always been touring from Hindustan to Calcutta, Chittagong and Sandwip on the one hand, and from Dhaka to Sylhet on the other, visiting all towns and villages of the eastern region [Eastern India], in a continuous effort to defend the fundamentals of Islām. In this endeavour over 50 years of my life was passed".³

Thus, his second meeting with the Fara'idi leader, Dudu Miyan, appears to have been held not earlier than A. D. 1860. No description of this meeting is

1 Wazir 'Ali : *Muslim Ratnahr*, p. 9. see Appendix B.

2 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat i-Qati'* p. 88.

3 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Murad al-Mu'minin*, quoted in Mawlana Abd al-Batin : *Sirat-i-Mawlana Karamat 'Ali Jawnpuri*, op. cit., p. 45.

available from the Farāidi sources. The Mawlānā, on the other hand, claims that "after having made humble, Dādu Miyan promised to attend congregational prayer of *Jum'ah* the next day, but quietly fled at night."¹ In another place the Mawlānā says that he had challenged Hāji Sharī'at Allah and Dudu Miyan whom he calls the "leaders of the Khārijis of Bengal" to show the validity of their doctrines on the basis of standard authorities, which they were unable to do². The venue of this challenge was undoubtedly Barisal.

Thereafter Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali had many encounters with the Farāidi leaders. He gives an impression that he chased the Farāidi theologians, especially Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār, from place to place until a public debate (*Bahāth*) was held between them in B. S. 1272 (A.D. 1867)³. He claims to have met the Khalifah first at Jhalukati (in the district of Bakarganj) and then at Bayazidpur (in the same district). But on both occasions, the latter fled at night. The Mawlānā met him again at Jhalukati and on this occasion the latter agreed to meet him at a public debate (B.S. 1271/A.D. 1866). The Khalifah, however, argued that there were no neutral person among the local 'Ulama who could preside over the debate since most of them were servants of the British government. It was, therefore, decided that each party would prepare a set of *Fatāwa* or legal decisions on six controversial points, viz., (i) relation between faith and work, (ii) the manner of initiation into mystic orders, (iii) employment of midwife or

1 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, p. 86.

2 *Ibid.*, see also Mawlana 'Abd al-Batin : *Sirat, op. cit.*, p. 86.

3 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, p. 104.

Dai, (iv) edibility of locust and grass-hopper, (v) congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*'Id*' and (vi) the definition of *mīṣr al-jāmi'*. This *Fatāwā* would then be submitted to the jurists of Makkah for judgment through the channel of a neutral person, who acting on behalf of both parties would convene a public debate next year at Barisal. *Qādī Shafi' al-Dīn* of Barisal was chosen as the middleman and the two sets of *Fatāwā* were submitted to him in due course, who forwarded them to Makkah¹. The ground for the first important debate between the *Fara'idi's* and the *Ta'aiyunis* was thus prepared, which took place in A.D. 1867. A second important debate was held in A.D. 1879. Although subsequently many debates were held between them, these two were of paramount importance as they determined once for all the basic lines of their polemics. Fortunately, we have got the full proceedings of the first debate and a good deal of description of the second. But before we go into the details of these proceedings it is worthwhile to consider an *Ishtihār* (hand-bill) produced by the *Mawlānā* and circulated widely in Eastern Bengal probably on the eve of the first debate, which has been reproduced by the *Mawlānā* himself in one of his pamphlets.² This *Ishtihār* gives in a nut-shell almost all the objections advanced by him against the *Fara'idi's*:

(i) *Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī* states that the *Fara'idi's* regarded work (*amal*) as a part of faith (*īmān*) and accordingly, to the *Fara'idi's*, a person who professed the dogma of faith (i.e., *kalimah*) but did not observe the

1 *Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : Hujjat-i-Qatt'*, p. 85f.

2 See *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*, vol. I. Calcutta, A.H. 1344, p. 108.

daily prayers (namāj or ṣalāt,) was a disbeliever (kāfir). Hence, they did not hold it lawful to say the funeral prayer for such a person on his death. As this view was the characteristic of the Khārijī sect, Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī identified the Fara'idis with the Khārijis and called them "the Khārijis of Bengal"¹.

(ii) Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī accuses the Fara'idis of having demolished the pulpit (*mimbar*) of many mosques in order to force their doctrine of the suspension of congregational Friday prayer of *Jum'ah*. He regards the prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id* as the most important institutions of Islām (*sha'a'ir al-Islam*), which must not be abandoned under any circumstances. Hence, the Fara'idis were deluded from the right path by their own peculiar views and were also misguiding others².

(iii) He contends that the Fara'idis were wrong in their objection to the *sufī* custom of clasping by the pīr the hand of the murīd or disciple at the time of initiation into mystic orders³.

(iv) He says that Fara'idis held it near obligatory (*wājib*) on the parents to cut off the navel cord of a new

1 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, 'Calcutta, A.H. 1344, pp. 87-88, and "Ishtihar" in *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*, vol. I, Calcutta, A.H. 1344, p. 108. It may be noted that the *Khariji* school was one of the principal contending parties against the *sunni* school of law (i. e., *Ahl-i-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at*) in early Islam (see *Encyclo-pædia of Islam*, vol. II, pp. 904-908, under the article "Kharidjites" and vol. IV, pp. 555-57, under the article "Sunna")

2 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : "Ishtihar in Dhai khirah-i-Karamat", p. 108.

3 Cf. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : "Ishtihar" in *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*, p. 108.

born babe, which was, in his opinion, a gross misinterpretation of Islamic law¹.

(v) He alleges that the Fara'idis are grass-hopper by mistaking it for locust.²

(vi) He accuses the Fara'idi leaders of unlawfully accepting sadqah fitr (*i.e.*, poor-tax for the '*'Id* festival), from their disciples in spite of their wealthy circumstances.³

(vii) He accuses the Fara'idi leaders of improperly beating their disciples with shoes as a punishment for all kind of offences.⁴

Debate of Barisal: On Monday, the 19th Asārh, B.S. 1272/A.D. 1867, thousands of Fara'idis and Ta'aiyunis thronged the Shāh Sāhib's Mosque at Barisal, which was chosen as the venue for a debate between Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī and Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbār, and the two leaders appeared on the scene accompanied by their retinue of the 'ulamā'. Many respectable citizens of the town (including Mawlawī Muḥammad Fāḍil, the kutwāl of the town *i.e.*, Police Officer), were present. Four renowned theologians of Barisal, namely (i) Khān Bahādur 'Abd al-Karim, (ii) Khān Bahādur Muṣīd al-Dīn Muḥammad, (iii) Qādi Sirāj al-Dīn Muḥammad, and (iv) Sayyid Tajammul 'Alī were appointed Judge and arbitrators. They formulated six questions on the above mentioned six controversial points, which were then put to the contending parties one by one.⁵:

1 Cf. Mawlawī Karamat 'Alī : *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, pp. 105-106.

2 Cf. Mawlawī Karamat' Alī's "Ishtihār" in *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*, p. 108.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 Mawlawī Karamat 'Alī ; *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, p. 104 f.

(i) In the first place, it was asked, "whether the funeral prayer would be said or not, on the corpse of a person who professed the *kalimah* (or dogma of the faith) but did not observe the daily prayers and the fasting in the Ramadān ?"¹

On this point both the parties agreed to the Hanafī and Sunnī view, and held that such a person was a *fāsiq* or a sinful believer and not a *kāfir* or disbeliever as the *Khārijīs* believed. Therefore, both of them agreed that the funeral prayer was to be said on the corpse of such a person.²

This implies that the Fara'iḍis do not regard '*'amal*' or action as an integral part of *iman* or faith, as was alleged by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī, and the Mawlānā's identification of the Fara'iḍis with the Khārijīs, therefore, is groundless.

(ii) Secondly, it was asked, "What is your opinion about the custom of clasping by the pir the hand of the murid (*i.e.*, disciple) during the ceremony of initiation into sufi orders ?"³

Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī made a distinction between two kinds of *bay'at* or initiation ceremony, *viz.*, (a) *bay'at-i-tubarruk i.e.*, initiation with a view to obtaining the blessings of the pir, and (b) *bay'at-i-idarat i.e.*, initiation into deeper mysteries of sufism. He maintained that the former process was open to all, commoners ('awām) and the chosen (khawas), while the latter process was open to the chosen alone. He further maintained that

1 Mawlāwi Karamat 'Alī : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, p. 104 f.

2 *Ibid*

3 Mawlāwi Karamat 'Alī : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, *op. cit.* p. 104 f.,

in the former process (*i.e.*, *bay'at-i-tabarruk*), the pir is lawfully permitted to take the hand of the murid in his own hand. In his opinion, the latter process (*i.e.*, *bay'at-i-idarat*) involved various conditions which a murid (*i.e.*, one desirous for initiation) must fulfil. He, however did not explain, what these conditions were¹.

Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbar questioned the validity of initiating the commoners (awam) into mystic orders. He held that among mystics only those who have successfully passed through all mystic stages and whose high attainments made them qutb *al-aqtab* (*i.e.*, the pole of the poles), were lawfully permitted to initiate disciple. In order to be eligible for initiation into the mystic orders, the talib or the seeker must, on the other hand, possess adequate knowledge of Islamic law and morality (*shari'ah*) and of the mystic path (*tariqah*). For, in his opinion, it was useless for an ignorant person to be initiated into the mysteries of *sufis*ⁿ and likewise it was of no use to be initiated by an imperfect mystic whose eyes were not free from the veils.²

We have seen earlier that the practice of clasping hand in the initiation ceremony, was opposed by the Fara'idis. They called it *dastibay'at* and denounced it as a sinful innovation. Hence, the Fara'idis practised oral or *iqrari bay'at*.³ This point appears to have been skipped over by the *khalifah* in the debate, as otherwise Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali would not have dropped an important point like this from the proceedings.

1 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, *op. cit.*, p. 104 f.

2 *Ibid.*

3 See *supra.*, Chapter vi.

(iii) Thirdly, it was asked, "Is it wajib (near obligatory) on the parents to cut off the navel cord of a new born babe with their own hands or do you hold a different view "¹.

On this point both the parties agreed on principle that cutting of the navel cord was a part of the profession of qabilah or midwife and that, it was not wajib on the parents to cut off the navel cord with their own hands. But in their interpretation of the term qabilah they differed. Mawlānā Kārāmat 'Alī interpreted it as meaning *dai* (*i.e.*, midwife belonging to the *dai* caste), the *Khalifah* as *dudh pila'i* (*i.e.*, wet nurse), and one Mawlāwī Ibrāhīm pointed out that the Arabic term "qabilah" literally means *dai jina'i* (*i.e.*, professional midwife). To this last interpretation, the *khalifah* also agreed².

In this context, it is necessary to clarify the sense of the word *dai-jina'i*, agreed to by *Khalifah* 'Abd al-Jabbār and as identified with the Arabic word "qabilah". The latter really applies to the profession of midwifery which can be followed by any body in the society. The term *dai*, derived from the Sanskrit *dhatri*, on the other hand, came to have two meanings in Bengali, *viz.*, (a) midwife and (b) foster mother³. Here *dai* as a midwife was a Muslim hereditary caste belonging to the lower classes, to which the abusive term *nar kata* (*i.e.*, the cutter of the navel cord) was applied⁴. But the foster mother or *dudh pila'i*, was a lady of some respect. The

1 Mawlawī Karamat 'Alī : *Hujjati-Qati'*, *op. cit.*, p. 104 f.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 50.

4 See *supra*, Chapter vi.

Fara'idis raised their fingers against the hereditary caste of the *dais* though they had no objection to the profession of a midwife followed in the usual course of life. Hence, it is in the sense of a voluntary profession that Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār agreed with Mawlāwī Ibrāhīm on the interpretation of the term qabilah.

(iv) Fourthly, it was asked, "Do you identify tiddi (*i.e.*, locust) with bhunge (*i.e.*, grass-hopper)? And, do you regard either or both of them as ḥalal¹ (*i.e.*, edible in accordance with the dietary rules of Islam)?".

Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī replied that, in his opinion, the locust and the grass-hopper are two distinct species and that the former was lawfully edible and the latter forbidden. The Mawlānā records further in his proceeding of the debate that Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār did not differentiate between the two and regarded both as lawfully edible. According to the same source, the Khalifah observed, "Should we regard the chicken of Arabia as different from the chicken of Bengal."² It is, indeed, reminiscent of James Wise's remark that Dudu Miyān regarded the locust and the grass-hopper as belonging to the same species, and passed the latter as lawfully edible on the analogy of the former—the difference in size and figure being explained with reference to the divergent climatic influences, such as visible between the big goats of the bank of River Jumna (in Bengal) and the small ones of the country-side³. Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī further reports that the Khalifah finally stated that any grass-hopper, the constitution of

1 Mawlawi Karamat Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qatlī*, p. 104 f.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

which conformed to the description of locust as given in the standard law books, would be regarded as lawfully edible and if it did not conform, it would be regarded as forbidden. The *kutwāl* of the town, thereupon produced a grass-hopper before them, and asked their opinion about it. Both Mawlānā and the Khalifah agreed that it was forbidden¹,

(v) Fi'lth'y, it was suggested by Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali that the question regarding the British rule² in India be included in the questionnaire ; that is, as to whether this country was Dār al-Isām or Dar al-Harb. But Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār opposed the move because of the political implications which the discussion of such a problem might entail. The suggestion was, therefore, dropped on the insistence of the Khalifah, and it was asked, "What is your opinion about the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id* to be held in Bengal and Hindustan at the present time under the British regime and British administration³ ?"

Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali replied that under the then prevailing circumstances he regarded the prayer of '*Id* as *wājib* (near obligatory), i.e., *fard-i-amali*, the observance of which is obligatory though strict faith in it may not be enforced : and that, he regarded the prayer of *Jum'ah* as *fard-i-i'tiqdi*, i.e., in which belief as well as practice are obligatory. Khalifah 'Abd al-Jabbār disagreed and opined that the congregational prayers were not lawfully permitted in Bengal and Hindustan under the circumstances which prevailed at that time, and

1 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, p. 104 f,

2 See our discussion of the problem in Chapter vi.

3 Mawlawi : Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, p. 104 f.

maintained that according to certain standard law books, congregational prayers under the then circumstances would be *makruh-i-tahrimah* or near prohibited. The Mawlānā challenged him to prove this point on the basis of the *fatwa* of Makkah, but the Khalīfah replied that the opinion of the Jurist-Consult of Makkah was not sought on the question of *Jum'ah*; his opinion was sought on the question of *mīṣr al-jāmi'* in which the solution of the problem of *Jum'ah*, and '*Id* also lay¹.

At this stage of the discussion was evident that in the *fatwā*, which were previously sent to Makkah on mutual-agreement of the parties, the Mawlānā had sought the opinion of the Makkan Jurist-Consult on six points including the question of the congregational prayers, whereas the Khalīfah had sought the opinion on five points only, leaving the question of the congregational prayers to be decided on the basis of the question of the *mīṣr al-jāmi'*; for, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, the Farā'iḍis believed that the congregational prayers could be held in *Mīṣr al-jami'* alone. One Hājī 'Abd al-Jalīl then produced a *fatwa* of Makkah (probably the one which was sent by Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī for approval), in which it was stated that under the circumstances which then prevailed in India, if the Muslims of a locality appointed an *imam* to lead them in prayer, the prayer of *Jum'ah* was lawfully permitted. Thereupon, addressing the *Kutwal* of the town the Khalīfah observed, "if we appoint an *imam* you would put handcuffs on our hands." The *Kutwal* kept silent, and the discussion on the point was closed.²

1 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*. p. 104 f.

2 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, p. 104 ff.

It may be pointed out that the approach of Ta'aiyunis and that of the Fara'idis to the problem of the congregational prayer were fundamentally different. The former viewed it from the angle of the status of the country *i.e.*, whether it is Dār al-Islām or Dār al-Harb ; and the latter viewed it form the angle of the status of the locality in which it is to be held, *i.e.*, whether it is Miṣr al-jami' or not. Thus, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī argued that the under British regime, which he termed as "Dār al-Amān" or State of Security, India was continuing in its former status of Dar al-Islam, the congregational prayers were, therefore, lawfully permitted¹. The Fara'idis on the other hand, argued that the congregational prayers could not be held except in miṣr al-jami'. *i.e.*, in a constituted township in which the presence of Amir and Qadi was necessary : but such miṣr al-jami' was not found in the then British regime of Bengal. They, therefore, held that the congregational prayers were no lawfully permitted there².

(vi) The sixth and the last question was asked, "How do you define Misr al-jami' (or constituted township which is a prerequisite for the permissibility of the congregational prayer of *Jum'ah*? Do you accept either or both the interpretations provided by the Hidāyah.

1 See *supra*, chapter vi.

2 See, *supra*, Chapter vi.

3 Mawlawi Karmat 'Alī : *Hujjat-i-Qati'*. p. 104 f. Imam al Hammam Shaykh Burhan al Din al Mar'ghinani has advanced two interpretations of *misr al-jami'* in his monumental law book *Hidayah* which were fixed as the term of reference for the discussion on this point. The passage is as follows :

(a) "*Misr al jami'* are those places where reside the *Amir* and the *Qadi* who enforce civil and criminal laws of Islam. This is the interpretation of Imam Abu Yusuf."

Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī replied that both the interpretations as provided in the Hidāyah were acceptable to him. Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbār said that he gave preference to the first interpretation of the two which demanded the presence of Amir and Qadi, and that, the second interpretation was unacceptable to him¹.

It may be noticed that the two above-mentioned definitions of *misr al-jami'* are contradictory to each other, at least, in one important respect ; for the first interpretation demands a all-set administration as a necessary condition for *Misr al-jami* whereas the second interpretation is based on a simple enumeration of the inhabitants of a locality. Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī did not indicate as to how he accepted two contradictory propositions together. We have already seen the reasons of the Fara'idis for accepting the first interpretation in preference to the second. In the first place, the Fara'idis argued that the first interpretation has also been ascribed to Imam Abu Hanīfah ; and secondly, another interpretation of Imām Abu Hanīfah narrated by Burhan al-Dīn in Hadāyah, which demands the presence of an Amir or administrator able to administer justice, as accepted by the Fara'idis².

The Mawlānā, however, pointed out that the Jurist-Consult of Makkah had laid down in the fatwa that both the interpretations as provided in the Hidāyah were

(b) "According to Imam Abu Hanifah, it is such a locality : where if all its inhabitants (*i.e.* on whom *Jum'ah* is obligatory) congregate in the biggest of its mosques, it cannot accommodate them all." (*c.f.*, *Hidayah*. p. 148). For a detailed dicussion of the controversy of *Jum'ah* and *Misr al Jami*, see Chapter vi.

1 Mawlawi karamat Ali : *Hujjat i Qati'*; p. 104 f.

2 See *supra.*, Chapter vi.

acceptable. The Khalifah replied that his rejection of the second interpretation of the Hidāyah as based on the evidence of many standard law books. This reply made the Mawlānā angry, and he bluntly challenged Khalifah saying "Did he (the Jurist-Consult) give an incorrect opinion?" Apparently in order to pacify him, the Khalifah observed, "The knowledge of the Jurist-Consult is greater than mine. Probably, he has given this opinion on the evidence of some acceptable law books. I agree to that¹," Thus, in spite of this face-saving agreement the debate ended in a fiasco.

We have already dealt with the questions of holding congregational prayers and the definition of *Misr al-jami'* in the preceding chapter, and need not go into further details. What is important to note here is that the underlying difference in the respective approach of the Fara'idis and the Ta'aiyunis to the problem of holding congregational prayers. As a matter of fact, the controversy over the prayer of *Jum'ah* was the real bone of contention between them, as the Mawlānā himself observed in course of his debate, "the foundation of the whole debate was laid on the controversy of *Jum'ah*".² Even subsequently this controversy never ceased to be a subject of hot debate between them down to the present day. For, notwithstanding the fact that the Fara'idi have recognised the lawfulness of holding congregational prayers in the towns of Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) since independence on the plea that the Magistrate and the Judge in the district headquarters,

1 Mawlawi Karamat, Ali : *Hujjat i Qati'*. p. 104 ff.

2 *Ibid.*

and the Subdivisional Officer and the Munsif in the subdivisional headquarters, have now legally taken the place of Amir and Qadi ; they still hold the view that the congregational prayers cannot be lawfully held in the villages or Qura which do not fulfil the conditions of *Misr-al-jami'*.

It appears from later evidences that the Mawlānā was not satisfied on any of the points debated at Barisal for, he renewed all his allegations against the Farā'idis as contained in his *Ishṭihār* in course of his subsequent lectures. It is however, interesting to note that in his *Qawl al Thabit*, which was not written earlier than A. H. 1289/A.D. 1878, he changed his line of attack on the Farā'idi leaders and described Dudu Miyān and his followers as Wahhabis "in reality" instead of calling them the *Kharijis* of Bengal¹.

On the other hand, the debate of Barisal proved a landmark in the development of the Farā'idi movement in the first place, this was the first time that the Farā'idis made, or rather were able to take, decisive stand against Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali after being chased by the latter from place to place for years. The very fact that *Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbār* firmly stood his ground against the attack of a person of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali's calibre, indicated a significant progress in the intellectual growth of the Farā'idis too. Secondly, the Farā'idi polemic being once formulated by the *Khalīfah*, was quickly grasped by the educated section of the Farā'idis. A Farā'idi Fatwā on the problem of holding congregational prayer, written in Arabic and Urdu, was subsequently published and distributed among the

1 Mawlawi Karamat Ali : *Qawl al Thabit*. p. 4.

local Khalifahs, and the Fara'idi points of view were further elaborated in popular *Puthis* written by the Fara'idis in Bengali language¹.

The debate of Barisal had focussed the gaze of the multitudes on the problem of Jum'a'ah and marked the beginning of a new era of debate on this topic, not only between the Fara'idis and the Ta'aiyunis, but also, between the Fara'idis and the followers of the local customs. One such important debate took place as we have seen earlier, at Madaripur in A.D. 1879, between Hafiz Ahmad (son of Mawlana Karamat 'Ali) and Nayā Miyān, which Navin Chandra Sen described as *Jumār Yuddha* or the battle of *Jum'ah*². Another important debate on the subject was held in B.S. 1309/A.D. 1903, at Dawud Kandi between the Fara'idis and the followers of the local customs³.

1 See, Chapter i, "Fara'idi Sources".

2 See, *supra*, Chapter v.

3 Cf. Dhurr-i-Muhammad : *Puthi*, p. 123 f. and Nazim al-Din : *Puthi*, p. 98 f.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE FARĀ'IDIS

The biographical sketch of the Farā'idi leaders discussed earlier gives us an insight into the nature of the gradual evolution of the movement itself. Hāji Sharī'at Allāh based his plan of reform on purely religious principles. But his son Dudu Miyān added a new feature, giving a socio-economic bias to the movement. The pattern of the then Muslim society as described by the contemporary English writers needed such an evolution to rest the movement on a solid foundation¹. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the organisational principles as laid down by Dudu Miyān.

It may be recalled that although the Farā'idis were Hanafī and like the vast majority of the Bengali Muslims followed the Hanafī school of law, yet a few peculiar doctrines which they developed gave their movement a distinctive character. Naturallay, the Farā'idi movement fostered a community of beliefs and interests among its followers, which brought them into a common platform and unified them into a brotherhood. The unifying tendency of the Farā'idis became apparent even at the initial stage when Hāji Sharī'at Allāh preached his doctrines at Nayabari. The sense of growing unity among his followers according to

1 See for instance, "A police Report of the Zilah Dacca-Jalalpur dealing with the manners and morals of the people, dated A.D. 1799", (edited by the present writer), *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. vii, part I, Karachi, January, 1959, pp. 24-35; and James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*. p. 6 f.

James Wise, alarmed the Hindu Zamindars, and as a result, he was expelled from the place¹.

The current tradition in the Fara'idi settlement of Rekabi Bazar² credits Hājī Shari'at Allāh for organising the local Panchayat there. But he is not known to have attempted to bring the Fara'idis into a compact organisation. In all appearance, it was Dudu Miyān who first realised the necessity or conceived the ambitious plan of organising the Fara'idis into a strong body and it was he who brought them under a central and hierarchical organisation. As James Wise holds, the credit of organising the Fara'idi society, therefore, goes to Dudu Miyān³.

In organising the Fara'idi society Dudu Miyān had two main objectives in view, viz., (i) protecting the Fara'idi peasantry from the oppression of the Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters, and (ii) securing social justice for the masses of the muslims. In order to secure the first objective, he raised a volunteer corps of clubmen and arranged for their regular training in the art of affray fighting. For securing the second objective he revived the traditional Panchayat system under Fara'idi leadership. The former was known as the Political branch (*siyāsi*) and the latter the religious branch (*dīnī*). Both these branches of the Fara'idi organisation were then co-ordinated by an hierarchical *Khilāfat* system, which brought all the Fara'idis of Eastern Bengal under direct control and supervision of Dudu Miyān.

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22.

2 Rekabi Bazar is in the Munshiganj subdivision of Dhaka district, visited by the present writer in 1958.

3 James Wise ! *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

Siyasi or political branch: The political branch of the Farā'idi organisation was an outcome of the conflict between the Farā'idi peasantry and the Hindu zamīndārs. We have seen earlier that Haji Sharī'at Allāh protested against the imposition of idolatrous cesses by the Hindu zamīndārs on the Farā'idi peasantry, which brought him into conflict with the zamīndārs in his later life¹. According to a government report, the zamīndārs levied not less than 23 items of unauthorised cesses in addition to the lawful land revenues as late as A.D. 1872². In order to resist the zamīndārs from extorting these cesses, Haji Sharī'at Allāh commissioned Jalāl al-Din Mullāh to organise affray fighters³. James Wise says that Dudu Miyan made his "most determined stand" against the "levying of illegal cesses by the zamīndārs", especially against the idolatrous taxes. Wise considers it as an intolerable act of oppression that "a Muhammadan ryot should be obliged to contribute towards the decoration of the image of Durga (a Hindu goddess), or towards the support of any of the idolatrous rites of the Hindu landlord", as the "only apology" for their continuation was claimed to be their "antiquity and adaptation to the feelings of the people"⁴. Thus, the conflict between the Farā'idis and the zamīndārs arose from a peculiar religio-economic reason. This was instrumental to Dudu Miyan's realisation of the necessity of organising the Farā'idis into a strong body.

1 See *supra*., Chapter iii, p. 17 ff.

2 See Appendix "C".

3 See *supra*., Chapter iv, p. 25.

4 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24.

On his assumption of leadership, Dudu Miyan appointed several *siyasi khalifahs* (*i.e.*, political agents or deputies) in different parts of the Faridpur district (including Madaripur subdivision), where the zamindars were specially hostile to the Fara'idis. The duty of the *siyasi khalifah* was to raise volunteer corps of affray fighters and to arrange for their regular training and secondly, to keep Dudu Miyan fully apprised of every new political development of his area. Later on, when the *dini* or religious branch of the Fara'idi organisation was developed into a centralised and hierarchical *Khilafat* system, the political branch was also absorbed into it, as will be seen below.

Fara'idi khilafat system : The Fara'idi *khilafat* system was designed to bring all the Fara'idis under the direct control and supervision of an hierarchy of authorised agents or *khalifahs*. At the apex of this hierarchy stood the *Ustad* (*i.e.*, the head of the Fara'idis) : below him were the *Uparastha khalifahs* (or the superior agents) ; next to them were the Superintendent *khalifah* ; and at the lowest rung of the hierarchy stood the *Gaon khalifah* (village agent) or the *Ward khalifah* (the agent in the ward of a town), as the case may be. The Fara'idi settlements of Eastern Bengal were divided into small village units, each consisting of 300 to 500 Fara'idi families as the geographical conditions permitted. One prominent member of each unit was appointed a *khalifah* and given the charge of the unit. Ten or more such village units formed what was often called a *gird* (*i.e.*, a circle or neighbourhood), which was under one Superintendent *khalifah*. The respective unit *khalifahs* of the area were subordinated

to him¹. The Superintendent *khalīfah* was required to maintain a *Piyādah* (*i.e.*, a guard or footman), and a *Peon* (or messenger). The *Piyādah* worked as the executor of orders of the Superintendent *khalīfah*, and the *Peon* was sent back and forth with messages and circulars to the unit *khalīfahs* of the *gird* on the one hand, and to the *Ustād* at Bahadurpur (in Faridpur district) on the other. Thus, the Superintendent *khalīfah* acted as an intermediary between the unit *khalīfah* and the *Ustād*, and kept in constant touch with both.

A few highly competent persons were appointed as advisers to the *Ustād*, who were styled as *Uparastha* or Superior *khalīfahs*. Such were, for instance, the guardians of *Naya Miyan*². Their functions were multifarious : to advise the *Ustād* on important matters, guide the *Fara'idi* community, propagate *Fara'idi* doctrines and promote the advancement of the *Fara'idi* movement. Some of them were assigned a particular subdivision or a district but mostly they worked as

1 Family records of (a) Jalal al-Din Mullah of Faridpur, *khalīfah* of Dudu Miyan, and of his grandson Kafil al-Din Ahmed, *khalīfah* of Khan Bahadur Sa'id al-Din ; and (b) tradition current in the Family of Darwesh 'Ali Munshi of Tippera, *khalīfah* of Dudu Miyan (c) of Munir al-Din *khalīfah*, and (d) Pahlwan Ghazi of Chandpur, *khalīfahs* of Dudu Miyan. See also James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23. Wise suggests that in partitioning Eastern Bengal into smaller units or circles Dudu Miyan followed the Vaishnava practice, but he did not state his reasons for thinking so. On the other hand, we know very well that assigning a certain area to a *khalīfah* is a time honoured practice of the sufi orders, familiar to Bengal for centuries.

2 See *supra.*, Chapter v, p. 49 f.

personal envoys of the *Ustad* to the *Fara'idi* community in general¹.

Functions of the Unit Khalifah : The Unit *khalifah* being responsible for the overall welfare of the *Fara'idi* community residing within the unit, his duties were, and still are, manifold. In the first place, he taught them the *kalimah* or the formula of faith², and the *dīniyat* or the religious practices. Secondly, he enforced the *fara'id* or religious duties, such as, the daily prayers, fasting of the *Ramadān*, payment of *zakāt* and *fiṭrah*. Thirdly he made suitable arrangement for prayer-halls in those places where no mosque existed and led the community prayers or appointed an *imām* for the purpose. Fourthly, he controlled the social and religious morals of his community, and administered justice in consultation with the elders. Fifthly, he administered religious services at the weddings and funerals, and shrived a dying man. Lastly, he maintained a *Maktab* or elementary school for the education of the children³.

As a remuneration for all these duties, he received a short of *ushar* or tithe from the produce of the land

1 The above picture of the structure of the Faraidi organisation has been drawn from the family records of the Faraidis and from personal observation. The practice of appointing *Uparastha khalifah* has fallen into disuse ; but the rest of the hierarchy as well as the maintenance of a *Piyadah* and a *Peon* continue down to the present day.

2 The *kalimah* is a short formula in Arabic consisting of two phrases, i.e., اشهدان لا إله إلا الله وابنه مساعي رسول الله which means, I give witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah.

3 Based on family records and personal observation.

belonging to the Fara'idi¹ of his unit. The rate was, however, one fortieth , equivalent to the rate of zakāt¹.

The functions of the Unit Khalīfah were, and still are, purely religious. He is required to keep himself aloof from politics. He must, however, take notice of all political developments in his unit, and report regularly to the Superintendent Khalīfah. He is also empowered to settle petty disputes relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, domestic or public quarrels, feuds over land or over any other property. This he does with the help of the elders of his unit.

Functions of the Superintendent Khalīfah : The duties of a Superintendent Khalīfah were by no means an easy job. In him was vested the religious as well as the political leadership of his *gird*. In the first place, he was required to watch closely the activities of the Unit Khalīfahs, guide their steps and check excesses. The inhabitants of the *gird* were entitled to lodge complaint against any oppression or excess of the Unit Khalīfahs to the Superintendent Khalīfah and seek for redress of any injury or harm done to them. Secondly, he acted as the court of appeal against the decision of the Unit Khalīfahs to which the disputants were entitled to take resort if they were not satisfied with any decision of a Unit Khalīfah. Such appeal suits were retried by the Superintendent Khalīfah sitting in a council of the Unit Khalīfahs of his *gird*. Thirdly, he was responsible for social and spiritual welfare of the Fara'idis of his *gird*, and was required to pay frequent visit to different

1 This is still practised in the Fara'idi villages of Chandpur in the district of Tippera.

localities and preach the fundamentals of religion. He had also to maintain an *Astānā* or a religious club in his own locality which was used as the venue for community prayers, public meetings, religious conferences and other functions of the community. When the Ustad or any other honourable guest came to visit the *gird*, the *Astānā* was used as the rest house. Moreover, as the Fara'idi's followed the Qndiriyah order of sufism mystic meditation (*halqah dhikir*) was held in the *Astānā* on every Wednesday night. Fourthly, he was required to take active interest in the political development (*siyāsī mu'amalat*) of his *gird*, in addition to his religious duties. If, however, he preferred to remain absorbed in religious affairs a *siyāsī Khalīfah* (political agent) was appointed for the area concerned. With the assistance of the Piyādah and the Peon, he kept himself in touch with every political development and kept the Ustad apprised of the situation through regular post. Fifthly, he was required to visit every locality of his *gird* once a year and see that the Fara'idi's one and all, had adequate knowledge of the fundamentals of religion. Lastly, the Superintendent *Khalīfahs* of Faridpur district, were required to raise a volunteer corps of clubmen and arrange for their regular training. This special measure was deemed necessary in the district of Faridpur, where the zamindars and the *gomastahs* were hostile to the Fara'idi movement¹.

Uparastha Khalifah and the Ustad ; Records of all transactions of the Unit *Khalīfah* and the Superintendent

1 Based on family records and personal observation corroborated by James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*. p. 23 f. and Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan*, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 149 f.

Khalīfah were kept in books of proceedings. When the Ustād or the *Uparastha Khalīfah* came to visit the *gird* the proceeding were presented to him. If he approved of them, he put his signature and seal on them. If he did not approve, he would direct that the proceedings be sent Bahadurpur for further examination. In all important matters the advice and interference of the Ustād were eagerly sought by the local Khalīfahs. In all religious and secular matters the Ustād was the final authority, and his decision was binding. If any party was not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent Khalīfah, an appeal lay with the Ustād. In such cases, the Ustād, would fix a date for the hearing, and summon the Superintendent Khalīfah and the parties concerned to Bahadurpur. In complicated cases an *Uparastha Khalīfah* was sent to the spot to hear the appeal and to give appropriate judgment in the capacity of being personal envoy of the Ustād¹.

The Farā'idi were not allowed to bring any dispute or legal suit before the government court without obtaining permission from the Superintendent khalīfah or the Ustad. The non-Fara'idis (Muslim and non-Muslim alike) having a dispute with the Farā'idi were encouraged to bring the case before a Farā'idi court instead of taking it to the government court, and if anyone ventured to take such a case to the law courts, the enforcement of the decree was resisted by the powerful Farā'idi khalīfahs especially if it went against the interests of a Farā'idi².

1 *Idem.*

2 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25 ; and Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan*, vol. iii, p. 149.

Further examination of the khilafat system : The above sketch of the Fara'idi khilafat system which has been drawn mainly from the family records of the Fara'i'di khifahs and from personal observation of the present day Fara'i'di society, is corroborated by the contemporary writings, especially by those of James Wise, Navin Chandra Sen, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī and H. Beveridge. But, as their account of the Fara'i'di society is partial and in many respects misleading, their views cannot be wholly relied upon. James Wise says :¹

"Following the example of the *Vaishnavas*², he [Dudu Miyan] partitioned Eastern Bengal into circles, and appointed a khalifah or agent to each, whose duties were to keep the sect together, make proslytes, and collect contributions for the furtherance of the object of the association. They further kept Dudu Miyan acquainted with every occurrence within their jurisdiction".

He further adds that Dudu Miyan settled disputes, administered summary justice and punished any Hindu, Muslim or Christian who dared to bring a suit for recovery of debt in the adjoining *Munsif's* court instead.

1 Cf. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

2 In his analogy of the *Fara'i'di khilafat* system with the *Vaishnava* organisation, James Wise appears to have been misled by the apparent similarity between the two. For, the *khilafat* system including various gradations of the *khalifahs* and the assignment of an exclusive area to each, was not a new invention of Dudu Miyan but derived from the time honoured practice of the *sufis*, which was in vogue in the Muslim society of Indo-Pakisan subcontinent even centuries before the advent of Vaishnavism. No wonder, therefore, that we find an organisation amongst the followers of the Patna school at Maldeh which is almost similar to the *Fara'i'di khilafat* system (see W. W. Hunter : *Indian Musalmans*. London, A.P. 1871. pp. 61-82).

of referring the case to his decision¹. With regard to the influence of the Farā'idi Panchāyat over the masses of the people, Wise says: "These Panchāyats [of Eastern Bengal] posses great influence among the people and in Farā'idi villages as they take cognizance of all offences, it is exceedingly rare that any case of violence or assault, committed within them finds its way to the regular courts"².

In the autobiography of Navin Chandra Sen, we find a detailed account of the actual working of the Farā'idi society in the time of Nayā Miyān. The following translation of a passage from Bengali into English will illustrate the point. Navin Sen says, "the majority of the *ra'iyats* of Eastern Bengal, notably of the district of Faridpur, are Farā'idi Muslims. They accept the words of Nayā Miyān as divine revelation and such slavish submission to the preast is not seen in any other human race. In this area [the subdivision of Madaripur], Nayā Miyān established a State of his own within the British regime. In every village, he appointed a superintendent and Piyādah through whom he kept the Farā'idis in his control. No dispute of the village could be submitted to the Diwāñi or Fawz-dāri 'Adalat [*i.e.*, the civil and the criminal courts established by the Government], without the permission of the superintendent³."

He adds further⁴, "at first, the case was tried by him and then if he accorded permission it could be sub-

1 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 25.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

3 Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan, op. cit* , vol. iii, p. 149.

4 *Ibid.*

mitted to the Police or brought before the Law Courts. If anybody acted to the contrary, he was branded as a renegade for religion or kafir¹. As a result, to whichever party of the dispute the superintendent lent his support, it would usually come out victorious even if it were on the wrong side. People would give false witness at his bidding, and when he went against anybody his case could never be proved even if the accusations were true. For, the Police and the Judge were helpless in eliciting any evidence in favour of the case... Even if a person secured a decree from the Law Court on a piece of land, having spent a considerable sum, he was powerless to take possession of it if the superintendent went against him".

One of the arguments of Mawlana Karāmat Ali against the Fara'idis was that since the Fara'idis had established a sort of their own regime in Eastern Bengal, they had no excuse to shrink from the prayer of Jum'ah. He says, "ask them : Whereas you have established the custom of administering justice among your disciples, and whereas you punish them by giving shoes and imposing fines to the extent of one hundred stroke, and one or two hundred rupees, and as these disciples still do not bring their complaint before any of the Judges [appointed by the British], what excuse has remained there, in accordance with your own prin-

1 Navin Sen appears to have confused between a renegade from the Faraidi movement and one from the religion of Islam. It is true that the Faraidis ostracised a renegade but never branded such a person as renegade from Islam or kafir, for they also professed themselves to be Hanafi and followers of *Ahl al-sunnat wal' jama'at* like the most non-Fara'idi Muslims of Eastern Bengal.

ciples, to refrain from saying the prayer of *Jum'ah* within the regime of your elected Amir?"¹

In his account of influential personalities of Bakarganj district, H. Beveridge says, 'if I were to mention non-officials, there are at least two who have exercised more influence than any judge or magistrate. I refer to the Mahomedan preachers named Karāmat 'Alī and Dudu Miyān.'²

If the above evidence is true, it must be conceded that Dudu Miyān's effort to organise the Fara'idi society was crowned with success. For, he was not only able to bring millions of the Fara'idis under his direct control by means of the Khilafat system, but was also successful in securing social justice for them and in safeguarding their interests from the oppressive hand of the Hindu zamindars, European indigo planters and their underlings. In organising the Fara'idi society, Dudu Miyān laid down the principle of equality and brotherhood, the influence of which on the Fara'idi society was far-reaching. This principle is discussed below.

Principle of equality and brotherhood: James Wise says that Dudu Miyan asserted "the equality of mankind" and "taught that the welfare of the lowest and the poorest was as much an object of interest as that of the highest and the richest"³. He further declared all men as brothers. and pleaded that when a brother fell into distresss, it was the "duty of his neighbours to assist him"⁴. According to government reports, the equality

1 Mawlavi Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, p. 107.

2 H. Beveridge : *District of Bakarganj, op. cit.* p. 381.

3 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24.

4 *Ibid.*

of the Fara'idis was "again and again emphasised"¹, and a common fund was created for the welfare of the brotherhood².

Furthermore, following the Qur'anic verse "Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to God"³, Dudu Miyan declared that land is a bounty of God, and man being His most favoured creature has equal right to exploit this divine gift. Land, therefore, belongs to those who exploit it. Hence, he regarded the exploitation of the peasantry by the zamindar's as a gross injustice (*zulm*)⁴.

Dudu Miyan, however, did not oppose the levying of taxes by the government. He only challenged the right of the zamindar to impose illegal and idolatrous cesses on the cultivators. For, he regarded the zamindars as merely tax collectors of the government. Hence, in his view, they were competent to realise only the land revenues authorised by the government. But, as the laws provided by the Permanent Settlement were prejudicial to the zamindar, "the peasantry were persuaded to settle on *Khās Mahal* lands managed directly by the government" and thus to escape "the payment of any taxes but that of the land revenue claimed by the State"⁵.

Nevertheless, the bulk of the Fara'idis had to live within the jurisdiction of the zamindars, and the latter,

1 *Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government*, vol. xiii. *Trial of Ahmadullah*, p. 141.

2 See, James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 23.

3 Qur'an : 2 : 129 ; 4 : 131.

4 Tradition current in the family of Dadu Miyan. See also James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24.

5 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24.

often found excuse to attach their lands for nonpayment of taxes or to bring civil suits against them for disowning them from their tenancy rights. Whenever the zamīndārs, tried to enforce their so-called legal rights against the Fara'idis, funds were provided by Dudu Miyan from the common purse for the defence of the ryots and even to sue the zamīndārs in the Law Court;¹ "or if it could be safe", says Wise, "clubmen were sent to destroy his zamīndār's property and the servants"².

1 Tradition current in the family of Dudu Miyan. See also James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, pp, 23-24.

2 James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 24.

CHAPTER NINE

GEOGRAPHY OF THE FARĀ'IDI MOVEMENT

Although the paucity of materials renders it difficult to ascertain the areas where the Farā'idi movement was effective, yet a few contemporary accounts throw considerable light on the tempo of its progress. However inadequate, these sources give us a general idea of its geography and population.

The earliest mention of the Farā'idi movement is found in a Robakārī of the Magistrate of Dhaka Jalalpur¹ dated the 29th April, 1831. It shows that Hājī Shari'at Allah was at that time propagating his doctrines among the peasantry of Ramnagar near Nayabari, in the modern village of Charigram in Dhaka district. His conflict with the local Muslims and the Hindu zamīndārs, which resulted in his expulsion from the village², indicates that by that time he did not succeed in gaining a good number of followers.

In A. D. 1837, a Hindu gentleman of Dhaka reports in *Darpan* (a local Bengali newspaper), that Hājī Shari'at Allah had about 12,000 weaver and Musalman disciples in the district of Faridpur and had become the most powerful man in the area. A few incidents referred to in the same report indicate that the Hindu zamīndārs were beginning to feel their inability to cope with the Farā'idis either in the contest of physical power or in the law courts. The writer states that Hājī Shari'at Allah had become much more powerful than his

1 See J.A.S.P., Vol. vi, 1961, pp. 123-24.

2 See *supra*, Chap. iii. p. 13, ff.

predecessor Titu Mir and that his influence on the clerks and pleaders of the Faridpur court was extensive¹. The venue of his activities was at that time, Bahadurpur, a village in the Sibchar Thana² where Dudu Miyan settled later on.

James Taylor, contemporary of Haji Shari'at Allah states in A. D. 1839 the Fara'idi movement spread with "extra-ordinary rapidity" in the districts of Dhaka, Faridpur, Bakarganj and Mymensingh.³ In A.D. 1843, of the Bengal Police described Dudu the head Miyan as a leader at the head of 80,000 men⁴. In A. D. 1847, the Fara'idis are noticed by the editor of the *Calcutta Review* as a very powerful sect. He says that they abound in the districts of Dhaka, Faridpur and Bakarganj⁵. J. E. Gastrell, a contemporary of Dudu Miyan, observes that the majority of the Muslims of Faridpur were Fara'idis and they formed an important part of the Muslim population of the neighbouring districts, i. e. Dhaka, Bakarganj and Jessore. He adds further that down to A. D. 1862, their number was "steadily increasing"⁶.

The next important report is found in the autobiography of Navin Chandra Sen, who was posted as the Subdivisional Officer of Madaripur in A. D. 1879. In his opinion, the majority of the Muslim peasantry of Eastern

1 Cf. Brajendranath Bandopadhyay ed., *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B. S. 1342, Vol. iii, pp. 311-12.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cf. James Taylor : *Topography*, op. cit., pp. 248—50.

4 See *supra*., Chap. iv, p. 30.

5 *Ibid.* p. 31.

6 Cf. J.E. Gastrell, *Jessore, Fweedpore and Backergunge*, op. cit.. p. 36.

Bengal, notably of the district of Faridpur were Fara'idis¹. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, who passed his life in touring Eastern India (A. D. 1835-1874) also testifies that the Fara'idi movement spread extensively in the towns of Dhaka, Faridpur and Bakarganj and in the rural areas attached to them². It may also be noted that the Fara'idi movement spread in Tippera during the life time of the Haji³.

As the Fara'idis did not register themselves in the census as a separate sect, their statistical position cannot be ascertained. In A. D. 1885, Hunter says, "the reforming faith of the Fara'idis has spread rapidly through the district" of Dhaka and that though they were mainly engaged in cultivation, many of them were also "engaged in trade—dealing in rice, jute, hides and tobacco"⁴. He describes the Muslims of Noakhali district as belonging "almost without exception to the sunni sect" and "most of them" as Fara'idis⁵. Likewise, the Muslims of Nadiya district are described in the *Gazetteer* as a "powerful Fara'idi or Wahabi community"⁶. About A. D. 1886, the Fara'idi movement was also exerting considerable influence in the district of Pabna in North Bengal⁷. In A. D. 1908, the *Chittagong*

1 See *supra.*, Chap. v, p. 51.

2 Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali "Ishtihar." in *Dhakhirkah-i-Karamat* Vol. i, p. 108.

3 See *infra.*, Appendices E and F.

4 W. W. Hunter ed. : *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1885, Vol. iv, p. 339 f.

5 *Ibid.*, Vol. x, p. 344.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 134.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 514

Gazetteer records some extent of progress of the Fara'idi movement in that district and its attainment to "great strength in Eastern Bengal"¹. In the *Statistical Account of Assam* (A.D. 1879), considerable progress of the Fara'idi movement has also been reported by Hunter. In the districts of Sylhet, Goalpara, Lakhmipur, Sibchar, Darang and Kamrup, there were many Fara'idis among the Muslim population, who, as a community, were generally well off².

J. E. Gastre, who was engaged in the survey of the districts of Jessore, Faridpur and Bakarganj from A. D. 1856 to 1862, ascribes a riverine character to the Fara'idi movement. He observes that the Fara'idis were especially numerous along the river banks and that the banks of Madhumati, Navaganga, Barakur and Harin-gata practically belonged to them³. A fieldstudy of the Fara'idi settlements (undertaken by the present writer in 1958 and 1959) and the data supplied by the Fara'idi family traditions indicate that the Bhuvaneshwar-Arialkhan river beds⁴ were the main route through

1 Cf *East Bengal District Gazetteers, Chittagong*, Calcutta, 1908, p. 56.

2 W. W. Hunter : *Statistical Account of Assam*, London, 1879, Vol. i, pp. 39, 188, 245 ; and Vol ii, pp. 47 and 283.

3 J.E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, Calcutta, 1868, p. 36, Nos. 150 and 151.

4 It may be noted that the Bhuvaneshwar-Arialkhan form a continuous river-bed, which, a few centuries back, was the channel for the waters of the Padma (Ganges), and is still the main artery of the Faridpur district. The Bhuvaneshwar river branching out from the Padma at a little distance east of Faridpur town, flows zigzag in a south-easterly direction towards Sibchar, where Shamail, the native village of Haji Shari'at Allah and Bahadurpur, the native village of his successors, are located. At Sibchar, it takes the name of Arial-

which the Fara'idi missionaries moved back and forth and spread their doctrines.

Bhuvaneshwar river being the off-shoot of the Padma river, the Fara'idis could make easy contact with the northern and eastern districts namely Mymensingh, Dhaka, Tippera and Pabna through the Padma, Jamuna and Meghna rivers. On the other hand, as the Arial-khan river falls into the Padma and flows southwards into the sea, the coastal sides of Chittagong and Noakhali were also accessible to them through the Bay of Bengal. Moreover, as Gastrell testifies, the Fara'idis made contact with the western parts of the districts of Faridpur and the eastern parts of the districts of Jessor and Khulna through Haringhata and Madhumati rivers¹. Naturally, the Fara'idi movement spread extensively over these riverine areas. In this connection, it may also be noted that during the rainy season, greater parts of the districts of Faridpur, Bakarganj, Dhaka, Tippera, Pabna and Noakhali go under standing flood water.

khan and divides itself into two streams, one flowing to the left and the other to the right, but both in a semicircular direction, to meet again at a little distance from the Madaridpur town. From there it flows almost parallel to the river Padma and goes to Barisal town in the Bakarganj district. During the life-time of Haji Shari'at Allah, it flowed by the side of his native village Shamail and was at that time popularly known as the Padma. Thus, Bhuvaneshwar-Arialkhan rivers connected the villages of the Fara'idi leaders with the town of Faridpur on the one side and with the town of Barisal on the other providing extensive opening to different parts of Eastern Bengal.

1 It may be noted that Haringhata and Madhumati rivers run in a continuous stream between the district of Faridpur on the one hand and Khulna and Jessor on the other and flowing north-to-south connects the Padma with the sea.

which facilitates easy access by small boats.¹ The family traditions of the Fara'idi leaders show that Haji Sharī'at Allāh, Dudu Miyan and Khan Bahādur Sa'id al-Din almost always travelled by boats. The reverine condition of the country was also the reason why Mawlānā Karāmat 'Ali and his successors preferred boat journey while going on their errant of preaching in Eastern Bengal.

Another feature which is noticeable in the spread of the Fara'idi movement is the thoroughness with which it was propagated. Hence, wherever conversion took place, it was wholesale. Such was the case, for instance in the Madaripur subdivision of Faridpur, Chandpur subdivision of Tippera and the village Rekabi Bazar in Dhaka. On the other hand, little or no attempt was made to extend the Fara'idi influence outside of Eastern Bengal. In fact, the existence of a good number of Fara'idis (at the close of the nineteenth century) in Assam, Agartala State and Chittagong Hill Tract is

1 It may also be noted that Faridpur and Bakarganj (the native districts of the Fara'idi leaders) are riverine districts where boat is the main means of communication. On account of this riverine condition, railways could not be introduced in Bakarganj and about Faridpur. J. C. Jack says that there must be very few spots "from which a journey of a single mile in any direction will not be obstructed by a stream of water course" (*cf. Final Report on the Survey (and Settlement Operations in the Faridpur District, 1904-1914*, Calcutta, 1916, p. 6). Moreover, about the distribution of population of Faridpur district, L. S. S. O'Malley says, "It may be predicated as a rough generalisation that the Muhammadans predominate in the riverside lands and *chars* and the Hindus in the inland marshes" (*cf. Bengal District Gazetteers, Faridpur*, Calcutta, 1925, p. 36). This may be considered another reason for the riverine character of the Fara'idi movement.

accounted for by the migratory activities of the Muslims of Mymensingh and Tippera districts to these outer regions. In the absence of such migratory activity of the Fara'idis to West Bengal, the movement did not spread there at all.

The administrative changes wrought by the British in Bengal had affected the urban and rural Muslim populace somewhat differently. For, whereas the former were losing their hold on the government jobs, trade, commerce and facilities in other vocations, the latter were oppressed by the new class of Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters. Thus, the sufferings of the former accrued mainly from the political weakness of the Muslims, whereas the suffering of the latter was mainly due to the changes effected in the agrarian economy of Bengal. The Fara'idi movement, with its doctrines of equality and brotherhood as well as by its relentless struggle against the Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters, had little appeal in the urban centres such as Dhaka, Comilla and Chittagong towns. But as these were the real problems in the interior of Eastern Bengal, specially in those areas where Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters were powerful, the Fara'idi movement answered the demands of the common men. Hence, it flourished mainly among the lower classes of rural Bengal and became most popular in those places where Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters were oppressive.

The progress of the Fara'idi movement followed a somewhat definite pattern. First of all, the leaders established a few propaganda centres in a local town

or a village. Such centres were established by Haji Sharifat Allah at the river-port of Chandpur in Tippera district, Nayabari and Rekabi Bazar in Dhaka district and at Kamalpur in the town of he Faridpur. Usually, the local Fara'idi's built and maintained a rest-house, called astānā, in each of these centres, for the comfort of the leaders as well as for those who came to meet them from the interior. The Fara'idi leaders would then keep on touring these places at short intervals, and make contact with the people of the outlying regions. On occasions of Haji Sharifat Allah's visit to these astānā, numerous people used to throng from far off places to see him, as his name as a theologian had spread far and wide.

The new converts usually turned out to be great enthusiasts, and not only carried the message of the Haji to their brethren in the interior but also tried to imitate the "propaganda centre" by building an astānā in their own village and electing an influential Fara'idi as their leader. Later on, specially at the time of Dudu Miyān, such local leaders were made Gāon khalifahs¹. Numerous examples of this category are observed in the district of Tippera. For instance, one 'Azīm al-Din Khundkār of Singardah (a village near Laksam) met Haji Sharifat Allah at Chandpur and became a convert. On return to his native village, he devoted most of his time to the propagation of the Fara'idi doctrines and in a few years so many converts were made that the necessity of appointing a local leader for the interior of Tippera was urgently felt. 'Azim al-Din was, therefore, appointed khalifah by

1 See *Supra*, Chapter viii.

Haji Sharī'at Allāh¹. But the Fara'idi's increased in the interior of Tippera Sadar subdivision so rapidly that in Dudu Miyan's time five more khalifahs and a Superintendent khalifah over them were to be appointed².

During the time of Dudu Miyan, the Fara'idi propaganda was intensified. His spectacular success against the Hindu zamindars, his tactful dealings with the English officers and his marvellous organizing capacity, captured the imagination of the masses ; and his extensive cross-country tours brought the hero in their close contact. None hesitated to join his party, As a result the flood of the Fara'idi movement swept over the whole of eastern Bengal. Even so, the Fara'idi's did not get as many disciples as they got supporters. This became evident specially after the death of Dudu Miyan, when the tide was turned by the preachings of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī.

Undoubtedly, the Fara'idi preachers made the followers of the traditional society (whom they called Riwaṭī) realise, how blindly they were groping in darkness and following superstitious beliefs and practices in the name of Islām. But, along with their doctrines of purification, the Fara'idi's prohibited the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*, which the Riwaṭīs were unwilling to give up. The attraction and repulsion thus produced in the minds of the people, probably created a new conflict in

1 Based on traditions current in the family of 'Azim al-Din Khundkar, collected during a field-study of the present writer in 1958. The above account is also corroborated by tradition current in the family of Haji Sharī'at Allāh. See Appendix "F".

2 See *infra.*, Appendix "F".

the Muslim society of Bengal, which prepared the ground for the general acceptance of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī's milder reforms. Thus, during the later half of the nineteenth century, when the protagonists of other religious movements, such as, *Ta'uiyuni Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* and *Ahl-i-Hadith*, who supported the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*, also intensified their propaganda in Eastern Bengal, the number of the Fara'idis steadily decreased except in the districts of Dhaka, Tippera, Faridpur and Bakarganj, where the Fara'idis had strong propaganda centres. Even in these districts the Muslims became sharply divided on the question of holding the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*, and the Fara'idis came to be known as the *Be-Jum'ah Wala* (the antagonists of the *Jum'ah*) and the rest as *Jum'ah Wala* (the protagonists of the *Jum'ah*). A good deal of family records and current tradition, collected by the present writer from various parts of the above-mentioned districts, indicate that from the time of Dudu Miyān's death in A. D. 1862 down to the present day there has been a general tendency among the people to fall away from the former group and join the latter, so that, at present the Fara'idis are seen in appreciable number only in the Narayanganj and Munshiganj subdivisions of Dhaka and in the Chandpur¹ and Sadar subdivisions of Tippera². Thus, the sudden swelling of the Fara'idi movement during the time of Dudu Miyān, shows how the Muslim masses of Eastern Bengal were groping for leadership and how enthusiastically they hailed the emergence of a strong leader.

1 See *infra.*, Appendix "E"

2 See *infra.*, Appendix "F"

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 'A'

Castes of the Faridpur Muslims

The following manuscript document, signed by W. A. Wells, Collector of Faridpur, on 19th of September, 1872, gives the census of different races and castes living in the district of Faridpur. The document has been in the Collectorate Record Room of Faridpur and was copied by the present writer in 1957.

According to this document, the total number of inhabitant in Faridpur district in 1872 was 10,12,524 ; the Muslims being 5,88,522, Hindus 4,23,599, Christians 401, Assamese 1 and Malabar 1.

The Hindus are listed under 108 castes and sub-castes and the Muslims under 18 castes. The portion which deals with the Muslims is reproduced below :

Ref. No. 520, dated 19-9-72.
From W. A. Wells, Collector of Faridpur.
To the Commissioner, Dhaka.

Subject : *Castes of Faridpur.*

Mahamadans (sec. 1)

No.	Caste	Members	Remark
1.	Beldar	313	Diggers and excavators
2.	Dai	195	The women mid-wife
3.	Dhawa	20	Grocers (?)
4.	Jola [Jolaha]	6,036	Weavers
5.	Kahar	13	Bearers

No.	Caste	Members	Remark
6.	Karigars	142	Weavers same as Jola
7.	Kulu	379	Oil manufacturers
8.	Kunjea	4	Sell vegetables
9.	Moghal	2	Moghal up-countrymen settled here,
10.	Masalchi	50	Torch bearer
11.	Mollah	85	Priest
12.	Unspecified	574,740	
13.	Nagarchi	40	Play on the tom tom
14.	Nikari	260	Sell fish, cut up fish
15.	Panjari	10	fish
16.	Pathan	229	
17.	Shaikh	5,534	
18.	Syed	480	
	Tatal	5,88,522	

APPENDIX 'B'

In Muslim Ratnahār, Wazir 'Alī says that Mawlana Karāmat 'Alī collided with the Fara'īdis in B.S. 1245 [A.D. 1839], which falls in the last year of Hājī Shari'at Allah's life. He says :¹

"In the year 1245 of the Hindustāni era [i.e., B.S.], Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī came to Bengal [i.e., Eastern Bengal] :

And ordered to hold the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*,
Hence some people inclined to ;
And, thus the opinion of Karāmat 'Alī also spread.
Whereas all followed Dudu Miān before".

¹ Wazir 'Alī : *Muslim Ratnahar*, p. 9.

"বারণ" পাঁচ চারিশ সালে হিন্দুস্থানী।
মাওলানা করামত আলী আসে বঙ্গে ও নি।
তিনি আসি জুমা মেল আদেশিয়া দিল।
ভবিষ্যতে দু'একজন সেন্দিকে বুকিঙ।।
এইমাত্র করামত আলীর রাজ্য হইল নাম।।
পূর্বেতে দুনু বিগার রাজ্য আহিজ তাজাম।।"

APPENDIX 'C'

A Report the Collector of Faridpur showing the items of Taxes and cesses levied in the district in A.D. 1872¹.

From the Collector of Faridpur,

To the Secretary of the Government of Bengal.

SUBJECT : Report on the Local Cesses and Taxes.

Sir,

With reference to your (Circular) No. 16, dated 10th instant (May, 1872), I have the honour to report that there is no local Taxes or Cesses raised under Government orders in this district.

I attach for your perusal two lists, one containing the Taxes under the Law in force² and the other containing a list of Illegal Cesses which, I believe, are levied.

(Sd.) W.A. WELLS

2. List of Illegal Cesses levied in the District of Faridpur.

Names of Cesses	Description.
1. Murucha	... Fee on marriage,
2. Agomani Kharcha	... Fee on the arrival of the Zamindar on estate [<i>i.e.</i> at the local Cutchery].
3. Bebaha [Bibaha] Kharcha	... Fee levied when any marriage takes place in the Zamindar's family.

1 Recovered by the present writer from the Record Room of the Faridpur Collectorate in 1958 with the permission of the District Magistrate of Faridpur. See Letter Issued, No. 169, dated the 16th May, 1872, File : Year 1872-73, Faridpur Collectorate Records.

2 List No. 1. of Legal Taxes was missing from the File.

Name of Cesses	Description
4. Srudh Kharcha	... Fee levied on the death of father, mother, or some other elderly member of the Zamindar's family.
5. Paita Kharch	... Levied when the Zamindar's son takes sacred thread.
6. Bhura Kharcha	... Levied when the arms of the Zamindar's son are pierced. (It is also called Godani Kharch).
7. Terpan	Levied since the cyclone of A.D. 1864.
8. Mukaddama Kharcha	... Levied to meet the expenses of the [Zamindar's] Mukaddama [litigation] at Court.
9. Jarimana or fines	... Levied on the occurrence of dispute between ryots.
10. Rusum for Darkhast	... Levied on every petition filled by the ryot to his Zamindar.
11. Bain Selami	... Levied on the preparation of Gur or Molasses (from date tree?).
12. Selami	... Levied on the preparation of Gur or Molasses (from sugarcane?)
13. Ruth Kharcha	... Levied on Zamindar's Ratha Yatra celebration.

Name of Cesses	Description
14. Batta	... Levied for alleged deficit on coins paid by ryots as rents.
15. Peyadah Kharcha	... Peon's fee for collecting rents, etc.
16. Tohuree	... Consideration Cess paid to Zamindar's Amlah [<i>i.e.</i> , clerk] for receiving rent.
17. Bhet	... Presents (to the Zamindar) on the occurrence of Srudh in the ryot's family.
18. Matshu Jugar	... Supply of fish by fishermen free of cost.
19. Peura Kharcha	— (Illegible).
20. Guzee Kharcha	— Contribution on account of Zemindar's winter clothing.
21. Malikan Suranjamni Kharcha	— Levied to re-imburse the expenses on account of the salary of Amlah [clerk].
22. Chhata or Chhatra Kharcha	... Levied to defray the expenses of Zeminder's umbrella bearer.
23. Imam Kharcha	— Levied for the Muharram, to which the Hindu as well as the Muslim Zemindar's subscribed.

(Sd.) W. A. WELLS

APPENDIX 'D'

A Report of the Collector of Faridpur relating to the rate of Land Revenues levied in A.D. 1782¹

From W. A. Wells, Collector of Faridpur,

To the Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Sir,

With reference to your Circular No. 33, dated the 4th ultimo, I beg to forward two statements, one for the subdivision of Gualunda and the other for the Saddur subdivision.

2. The rates have been carefully ascertained by enquiries made through the Police. Many respectable people of the different parts of the district who are expected to possess thorough and intimate knowledge on the subject have also been consulted.

3. The measures vary in different Parganahs but nobody could give any satisfactory explanation of the cause of this variation. Different rates are also paid in different Parganah's situated within the jurisdiction of the same Police Station for the same kind of land for the same crops, but the difference is not so great as to call for explanation.

It is supposed that the levy of the rates depended originally, as it does at the present day, on the power and influence which the Zemindar possessed. It is generally found throughout the district that two plots of

1 Recovered by the present writer from the Record Room of the Faridpur Collectorate in 1958 with the permission of the District Magistrate of Faridpur. See Letter issued, No. 424, dated the 12th September, 1872, File, Year 1872-73 Faridpur Collectorate Records.

land situated side by side and similar in every respect pay different rates, and this is because the proprietor of those (lands) is more powerful and exacting than the of the other. In short, where the Zemindar is powerful he can and does in many instances enhance the rates, while the neighbouring Zemindar if he happen to be weak and poor must content himself with low rates.

(Sd.) W. A. WELLS

APPENDIX 'E'

Fara'idi Settlement of Chandpur ; A field-study (A.D. 1958)

The river-port of Chandpur played very important role in the spread of the Fara'idi movement. Chandpur was frequently visited by Haji Sharifat Allah and his son Dudu Miyān. It has always been a formidable Fara'idi stronghold, and the Fara'idis retained considerable strength throughout this subdivision in the social as well as religious spheres down to the present day. This is clearly borne out in the village administration of the subdivision, where out of about 53 Presidents of the Union Boards about 35 are claimed to be Fara'idis¹.

According to the Fara'idis, Chandpur proper is the land between Char Lakshmi to Shaitnol (about 30 miles from south to north) and from Meghna to Shakdi (about 8 miles from west to east), which is divided by the Fara'idis (from the time of Dudu Miyān) into one hundred units, each unit being put under the control of a khalīfah. About twenty-two to twenty-eight khalīfahs of the units (whose official title is Block khalīfah) are again brought under the supervision of a Superintendent khalīfah. Thus, at present, there are four Superintendent khalīfahs and about 100 Block khalīfahs in Chandpur. Muhammad Habib Allah, who is the Superintendent khalīfah of the Chandpur town and its surroundings has only 10 Block khalīfahs under him. This reduction in the number of Block khalīfahs under

1 Statement of Haji 'Abd al-Qadir Bhuiyan, President, Union Board (Chandpur Town Area), who himself is a Faraidi (1958).

him and consequently reduction in area, is due to the inclusion of the town and its knotty problems under his supervision¹. Mawlawī Ḥarun al-Rashīd, who is a Block khalīfah, has 360 houses to look after².

The first Fara'īdī, khalīfah of Chandpur was Muṇīr al-Dīn Khalīfah. He came to Chandpur in his boyhood from Hatiya to study Arabic and Persian. Later on, he married a local girl and settled permanently at Chandpur. When grown up, he met Hāji Sharīat Allāh several times in course of latter's visit to Chandpur, and became an ardent disciple of the Hāji. He was a very pious man, and shortly before the Hāji's death he was made a khalīfah³. He died in Agraḥāyan, B.S. 1282⁴.

His khilāfat was inherited by Hamīd Allāh, his son-in-law, who died in B.S. 1322 at the age of about 76 years. His son 'Abd al-Qādir is the present President of the Chandpur Union Board. The khilāfat has been bestowed on 'Abd al-Qādir's son-in-law, Muḥammad Habīb Allāh.

The second important Fara'īdī khalīfah of the olden days, was Pahlawān Ghāzi Munshi. He built a *Masjid* and a *Madrasah* and made an endowment of about 15 bighās of land for their maintenance. The *Madrasah*, is named after Dudu Miyān⁵ "Muhsiniyah Madrasah".

1 Statement of Muhammed Habib Allah.

2 Statement of Mawlawi Harun al-Rashid.

3 Statement of Hāji 'Abd al-Qādir.

4 Tomb inscription of Muṇīr al-Dīn in the Nutan Bazar 4/12 ward of Chandpur Town. The name is inscribed as "Pir Muniruddin-Khalifah" in Bengali script.

5 Dudu Miyān's name was Muhsin al-Dīn Ahmad.

and is still running in good condition. The Għażi was a khalifah of Dudu Miyān. He died about A.D. 1925, when he was 120 years old.

Pahlawān Għażi was a Superintendent khalifah and was assigned 28 villages. His khilafat was inherited by his grandson Rafi' Muhammād Pātwāri. Rafi's son Mawlawi Samir al-Din Aħmad was appointed khalifah after his father's death. The present khalifah of the area is his son Muhammād Sa'id al-Din Khalifah¹.

Another Superintendent khalifah of a later time was Shah Muhammād Waħid Bakhsh, who died in 1940, when he was about 60 years old. He had 25 villages under him in the Parganah of Amirabad. He was a khalifah of Khān Bahādur Sa'id al-Dīn², and was Talukdār. He established a High Madrasah at Saharmali, and had great hold on the people³.

During the lifetime of Hāji Shari'at Allāh there were only a few thousand Far'idis in Chandpur. But when Dudu Miyān came to the helm of affairs, the number increased with extraordinary rapidity, and in a short time the entire population of the subdivision became staunch adherents of the great leader.

During the time of Munir al-Din Khalifah and Pahlawān Għażi, there was no law court at Chandpur town. The nearest law court was located at Narsingpur. The Khalifahs then played very important role in maintaining order and justice in the society.

1 Statement of Muhammād Sa'id al-Din Khalifah.

2 The youngest son of Dudu Miyān and later Ustad of the Fara'idi movement.

3 Statement of Shah Muhammād Hasan relative of the deceased Shah Muhammād Wahid Bakhsh.

The Fara'idis were organised in small Samaj, consisting of about 40 families or more. Each Samaj had five Matbars (Elders), with whose help, the Khalifah administered justice to the people. If a person was not satisfied with the judgement of the Khalifah, he was at liberty to make an appeal to the head of the Fara'idi movement at Faridpur. But if he took resort to the court of the British Government his case was invariably lost. Because, in the first place, none would like to offend the powerful Khalifah by standing witness for him; and secondly he was sure to be ostracised in the society. Besides, it was difficult to enforce the Judgement of the court in the remote villages against the organised Fara'idis.

The forms of punishment which were imposed by the Khalifah were whipping, blows of shoes and ostracism, which are practised by the Block Khalifahs and the Superintendent Khalifahs down to the present time.

Pir Bādshah Miyan, the present head of the Fara'idis, has a great hold on the people of Chandpur. His piousness, simplicity and moral courage are admired by the Fara'idis and non-Fara'idis alike. He is said to have cleared Chandpur town of a few hundred prostitutes.

At the present time, the Fara'idis Khalifah exercises considerable control in the social and religious sphere of the society. He is required to give sanction to matrimony and receives a fee of two rupees on every marriage taking place in his area. He arbitrates disputes relating to landed property, inheritance, marriage and divorce; he punishes, those who indulge in anti-social and irreligious activities, and his advice and assistance are eagerly sought in times of distress.

In 1947 there was an attempt at Chandpur to revive the old Fara'idi system of administration. An association was formed, which was called "Chandpur Sharai'atiya Momen Committee", 24 branches of which were opened in the villages and each branch, with a five-man committee, was entrusted to administer shari'ah to the people¹.

The association functioned vigorously for about one year, but since 1949 sank gradually into non-existence.

Shortly after independence, Pir Badshah Miyan visited Chandpur and permitted the people to pray *Jum'ah* in the town. A meeting was called by the Sharai'atiya Momen Committee on the 5th November, 1947, to fix the date for the first *Jum'ah*. Since then the Fara'idis pray *Jum'ah* and 'Id in the town. But these prayers are not permitted in the villages. Still, some of the Fara'idis mix with other Muslims and pray *Jum'ah* with them in the villages as well.

1 A number of documents relating to the Sharaiatiya Momen Committee have been collected by the present writer.

APPENDIX 'F'

Fara'idi Settlements in the interior of the district of Tippera : A field-study (A. D. 1958)

In the spread of the Fara'idi movement, the propaganda centres of Bahadurpur (in the district of Faridpur), Rekabi Bazar (in the district of Dhaka) and the river-port of Chandpur (in the district of Tippera), played an important role. In fact, these three centres formed as if the tips of a triangle from which the Fara'idi influence flowed into the interior regions.

Chandpur had become a Fara'idi stronghold during the life time of Haji Sharī'at Allāh and his frequent visit to this port-town created a sensation among the credulous masses of the interior of Tippera. Inspired by religious motive or just curious to see him, many people came to Chandpur from far off villages at the time of his visit.

Haji Sharī'at Allāh's call for repentance (*tawbah*) his appeal to them to join him in strengthening Islām, enkindled new hopes and roused noble sentiments in their hearts. As a result, they returned home as inspired Fara'idis or at least supporters of the reform movement. As Haji Sharī'at Allāh never visited the interior of Tippera, this was in general the pattern of contact between him and the mass of the people.

Evidences gathered from the district of Tippera and Noakhali indicate that the Fara'idi movement met with no effective opposition in the interior of these districts during the life time of the Haji (*i.e.* till A.D. 1840). For, Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī, the leader of the *Ta'aiyuni* movement and Mawlawi Imam al-Din (who preached the

reform doctrines of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid in the district of Noakhali), began to exert their influence about A.D. 1850 onwards, who on account of their zeal for defending the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and 'Id curbed the progress of the Fara'idī movement. Hence, the fact that the Fara'idī movement did not become universal in the interior of Noakhali and Tippera before this time, may have been due to the lack of proper exertion on the part of the Fara'idī leaders.

During the eighteen-thirties the number of Fara'idīs had, however, increased considerably in these two districts, specially in the Sadar subdivision of Tippera; so that in the latter place, the need for appointing a *khalīfah* was deeply felt. Thus, 'Azim al-Dīn Khundkār of Singardah was appointed *khalīfah* by Hājī Sharī'at Allāh, and was given the charge of administering religious law (*shari'ah*) to the Fara'idīs and settling their disputes by arbitration. 'Azim al-Dīn died about A.D. 1842 and the *khilāfat* remained hereditary in his family down to the present day.

In eighteen-forties the Fara'idī propaganda was intensified by Dudu Miyān and his colleagues. Dudu Miyān's spectacular success against the Hindu zamindārs, his tactful dealings with English officers and his uncommon organising capacity captured the imagination of the masses. On the other hand, his crosscountry tours in the interior of Tippera brought them in contact with his attractive personality. As a result, the flood of the Fara'idī movement swept over Tippera district.

If we are to accept the witness of the present generation, the Brahman Baria subdivision appears to

have been a compact colony of Dudu Miyan's supporters. But at present the number of Fara'idi's there is negligible. In the interior of two other subdivisions, i.e., the Sadar subdivision and Chandpur subdivision Dudu Miyan was able to gain a large following, and considerable number of villages continue to be compact Fara'idi settlements down to the present day.

The remnants of the Fara'idi settlements in the interior of the Sadar subdivision indicate that the penetration of the Fara'idi influence flowed from Chandpur and Dawud Kandi. A narrow strip of villages stretching from Chandpur to Kachua and thence to Dawud Kandi is still dominated by the Fara'idi's.

During the life time of Dudu Miyan (d. 1862) the number of khalifahs in this area was increased to five including the successors of 'Azim al-Din Khundkar¹. Again, one of them, Darwesh 'Ali Munshi was made Superintendent khalifah of Kachua, Chandina and Dawud Kandi which formed a circle or gird. In this circle he had his own khalifahs², with whose assistance he was commissioned to administer the shari'ah or

1. The following were the khalifahs of Dudu Miyan :

- (1) 'Ata' Allah Munshi of Singardah, (2) Mati' Allah Munshi of Singardah, (3) Bakhshi Miyanji of Baichbara Nayapara, (4) Faid al-Din Munshi of Purba Baichbara, and (5) Darwesh 'Ali Munshi of Bajarikhula.

2 The following persons were the Khalifahs of Darwesh 'Ali Munshi :

- (1) Anis Miyanji of Satbaria, (2) Akhtar Allah Munshi of Kalagaon, (3) Yanus Munshi of Batakashi, (4) 'Ata' al-Din Akhand of Kalasuna and (5) Safar al-Din Miyanji of Atomur. Even today the descendants of these khalifahs pay allegiance to the descendants of Darwesh 'Ali.

religious justice to the Fara'idis. Also, he was empowered by Dudu Miyan to make his own disciples.

The rail-road from Chandpur to Laksham has disturbed the Fara'idi settlements which formed a continuous line there. But from Singardah to Dawud Kandi a Fara'idi belt exists down to the present day¹. There are other Fara'idis settlements in the rest of the two subdivisions and individual Fara'idis here and there, but they are sporadic and scattered.

1 This Fara'idi belt includes the following villages : Kumarkasha, Andhirpar, Nahara, Singardah, Noagaon, Baichhara, Ainpur, Sankarpur, Krishnapur, Ragdoil, Jaynagar, Kalasuna, Maligaon and Mahmudpur.

APPENDIX 'G'

A Few Prominent Fara'idi Leaders

1. Jalal al-Din Mullah of Faridpur :

Jalal al-Din was a resident of Kamalapur in the modern Faridpur town. According to his family tradition¹, one of his uncles met Haji Shari'at Allāh at Makkah. When the Hāji returned to Bengal and started his reform movement Jalāl al-Dīn's uncle supported him. Through his influence, Jalal al-Din was converted to Fara'idi doctrines at a young age.

Jalāl al-Din belonged to a "Mandal" family. After becoming a Fara'idi, he read the Qur'ān and learnt a little bit of Arabic and Urdu. Thereupon Haji Sharī'at Allāh changed his family title to "Mullāh".

In the eighteen thirties, he rose to an influential position in the society of his locality, not only as an elder but also as a good wrestler. For, in those days, affray fighting over disputed lands was a common occurrence and Jalal al-Dīn Mullāh could play wonderfully with sticks.

In this period, the antagonism between the Hindu zamindārs and Fara'idi peasantry created a tense situation. Hāji Sharī'at Allāh felt the need of raising a band of fray fighters to defend his followers from the oppression of the zamindārs and commissioned Jalāl al-Din Mullāh to organise a corps of affray fighters and to train them in clubmanship. When Dudu Miyān returned from Makkah about A. D. 1836, he joined hands

¹ Supplied to the present writer by Mawlavi Rafi' al-Din Ahmad of Kamalapur, great grandson of Jalal al-Din Mullāh in 1958.

with Jalāl al-Dīn Mullaḥ in training and supervising affray parties.

During Dudu Miyan's time, Jalal al-Din played an important role in the siyāsi or political branch of the Fara'idi organisation. He died sometimes after 1850.

2. Munshi Faīd al-Dīn Mukhtar :

Faīd al-Dīn Mukhtar son, of Agar Muḥammad Sutkār, was originally a resident of Jessore¹, who emigrated to Faridpur about A. D. 1840. According to tradition current in his family at Faridpur², he was sent to Calcutta to study Arabic and Persian at an early age. He was strong and stout, and soon developed a taste for wrestling. At that time Titu Mir was a professional wrestler at Calcutta, and young Faīd al-Dīn joined his party. Later on when Titu Mir (after being a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd), returned to Calcutta (circa A.D. 1827), Faīd al-Dīn had the opportunity of meeting him there. Thereafter, Faīd al-Dīn became a staunch supporter of Titu Mir, and on his return to Jessore, his native district, he began to preach the puritan doctrines advocated by Titu.

Not far from his native village Panipara, there was an indigo factory at Mirganj, on the bank of Barasia river. The oppression of the indigo planters on the Muslim cultivators soon attracted his attention. He preached the new reform doctrines to the peasantry and organised them into a solid party. About A.D. 1840, the

1 Cf., MS. Document, giving power of legal attorney by Dudu Miyan to Faīd al-Dīn Mukhtar, dated A. D. 1849, recovered by the present writer (see J.A. S.P., Vol. vi. 1961 pp. 124-31).

2 Supplied to the present writer by Mawlawi Rafīq al-Dīn Ahmad, grandson of Faīd al-Dīn Mukhtar of Faridpur.

conflict between the cultivators and the European planters had come to grips, and in one of the skirmishes Faid al-Dīn was wounded. Thereafter, he did not feel secure to live within the reach of the Mirganj indigo planter, and emigrated to Faridpur. There he married the daughter of Jalāl al-Dīn Mullaḥ, an eminent Fara'idi leader, and settled there permanently. He, however, did not become a Fara'idi himself but remained a follower of Titu Mīr till his death¹.

At Faridpur, he took up legal profession or Mukhtārship at the district court. In A.D. 1849, he was appointed legal attorney by Dudu Miyān to look after his landed property and to represent him in the court and other government offices². In A.D. 1862, on the death of Dudu Miyān, he was appointed one of the guardians of Dudu Miyān's sons. He died sometimes later.

3. *Mawlawi Kafil al-Din Ahmad*³ :

Kafil al-Dīn Ahmad, the eldest son of Munshi Faid al-Din Mukhtār, was born in A. D. 1856. He was a colleague of Khan Bahādur Sa'id al-Din Ahmad and went to school together with him at Bahadurpur and Dhaka. At Dhaka, he studied under Mawlāna Dīn Muhammad. Later on he got admitted at the Muhsiniyah Madrasah of Dhaka and became a student of Mawlānā 'Ubayd Allāh 'Ubaydī.

1 Information supplied to the present writer by Mawlawi Rafi al-Din Ahmad, grandson of Faid al-Din Mukhtar of Faridpur.

2 MS. Document, *op. cit.*

3 The following account is based on the family tradition of Mawlawi Kafil al-Din Ahmad collected by the present writer during a tour in 1958 from his son Mawlawi Rafi al-Din Ahmad of Kamalapur in the town of Faridpur.

On his return to Faridpur about A. D. 1885, he was appointed a *khalifah* by Khan Bahadur Sa'id al-Din. Subsequently he was made a Superintendent *khalifah*. Towards the close of the 19th century he was promoted to the position of *Uparastha khalifah*, and a *sanad* was granted to him, assigning him the charge of maintenance of social and religious justice among the Fara'idis of Rajbari, Bhanga, Maqsudpur, Bhushna, Faridpur, Sadarpur, Nagarkanda and of the surrounding territories. In other wores he was given the charge of Faridpur Sadar subdivision and parts of Goalunda subdivision.

Under Mawlawi Kafil al-Din there were Superintendent *khalifahs*. The most prominent among them were (1) Kazem Mullah¹ of Gird-i-Jahanpur and (2) Munshi Ghayath al-Din Shah Faqir² of Gird-i-Taalmā.

In the Fara'idi organisation the administration of justice occupied a prominent place. The Fara'idis were not allowed to file a suit in the law courts without the permission of the Superintendent *khalifah*. Such permission was given only in complicated criminal cases. All other disputes were settled by the *khalifahs*. As a Uparastha *khalifah*, Mawlawi Kafil al-Din was required to go around his area frequently for settling disputes and administering justice and to give spiritual training

1 Formerly Kazem Mullah belonged to a *Julaha* (weaver) caste. On his acceptance of the Fara'idi doctrines, his title of "Julaha" was changed to "Karigar". Later on, as he learnt to read the Qur'an and to understand its simple meaning he was given the title of Mullah.

2 Ghayath al-Din was living in 1958, whose age was claimed to be 120 years.

to numerous Fara'idijs who were initiated into the Qadiriyyah sufī order. Besides, he was a good orator, and preached in large and small gatherings arranged by the Fara'idis at different places. Sometimes religious conferences were held by the Fara'idijs at Faridpur, Madaripur, Barisal, Dhaka, Chandpur and Rekabi Bazar, in which he took a prominent part.

From the middle of the 19th century Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī of Jawnpur and his followers vehemently challenged the Fara'idi point of view on the question of holding congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id*. Public debate between them and the Fara'idijs had become a familiar scene in Bengal. Mawlawi Kafīl al-Dīn was frequently called for defending the Fara'idijs' tenets in such debates. When Mawlānā Karamat 'Alī's son Mawlawi 'Abd al-Awwal visited Eastern Bengal¹, Kafīl al-Dīn had a number of debates with him.

At the time of the partition of Bengal in 1905, Mawlawi Kafīl al-Dīn and Khān Bahādur Sa'id al-Dīn supported the move and joined their hands with Nawab Sir Salim Allāh of Dhaka. They stood against the propa-

¹ Mawlawī 'Abd al-Awwal is known to have paid several visits to Eastern Bengal (*cf.* Abu 'I-Bashar and 'Abd al-Batin : *Sirat-i-Mawlānā 'Abd al-Awwal Jawnpuri*. Jawnpur, 1370 A.H. pp. 52, 53, 99, 127, 134, 153 and 185 f.) But no mention of the debates between him and Mawlawi Kafīl al-Dīn has been made in his biography. The Mawlawī had, however, written and published a tract in Urdu, entitled *I dhār al-Wara' bi-Sihāt al-Jum'ah fi I-Mudūn wa 'I-Qurā* (*i.e.*, Permission of the pious theologians on the lawfulness of holding the prayer of *Jum'ah* in the towns and villages), which was precisely the subject of controversy between them (*cf. ibid.*, p. 189). Thus, it appears that such debate between them may have actually taken place.

ganda drive of Sri Ambika Charan Majumdar of Faridpur, the one time President of All-India National Congress. As the Hindus boycotted the English goods, he opened a store of Liverpool salt at Faridpur.

During the non-co-operation movement of 1921-1922, he sided with the *khilafatis* and was jailed along with Bādshāh Miyān. From that time the Fara'idi's changed their previous policy towards the British Government of India from friendship¹ to antagonism.

From the time of *khilāfat* movement, the learned doctors of Deoband school were exerting great influence in the interior of Bengal. The need of the unity of the Muslims was looming large in the imagination of everyone, and the importance of the petty theological controversies such as the problem of holding the prayer of *Jum'ah*, had receded to the oblivion. As the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id*' were instrumental to unity, many of the Fara'idi's, especially the younger generation, felt strongly inclined in favour of holding these prayers. In accordance with the Fara'idi tenets Mawlawi Kafil al-Din was of the opinion that congregational prayers could not be lawfully held in the villages. But when he visited the metropolis of Calcutta in 1927, he had participated in the prayer of *Jum'ah* at the Jāmi' *Masjid* and saw nothing wrong in holding the congregational prayers in such towns and cities which were the seats of government authorities. On the insistence of his son Mawlawi Rafi' al-Dīn Ahmad to re-examine the Fara'idi views on holding congregational prayers, he sent Rafi' al-Din, in 1934, to Mawlana 'Abd al-Rauf

¹ See *supra.*, Chapter v.

Dānepuri and Mawlānā Zafar Ḥamad 'Usmāni to consult their opinion on the matter. As they gave their option with appropriate evidence from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, in favour of holding congregational prayers in the villages and towns of Bengal, Mawlāwi Kafīl al-Dīn granted permission to his followers to hold the prayers of *Jum'ah* and 'Id at Faridpur. But unfortunately Kafīl al-Dīn was attacked by paralysis at that time and could not participate in the first *Jum'ah* prayer held by the Fara'īdis of his locality in 1935. Mawlāwi Kafīl al-Dīn died about A.D. 1938.

4. Sayyid 'Azim al-Dīn Khundkar of Tippera and his successors¹ :

Sayyid 'Azīm al-Khundkār (d. *circa.* 1852) came in contact with Hājī Sharī'at Allāh at the river port of Chandpur during one of the visits of the Hājī to that place. Whenever the Hājī came to Chandpur, people of the interior of Tippera district used to come there in groups to meet him. 'Azīm al-Dīn came to see the Hājī from far off Singardah, his native village, about A.D. 1830, and was greatly impressed by his admonition. He returned home as a sincere disciple of the Hājī and an ardent supporter of the Fara'īdī movement.

Towards the end of Hājī Sharī'at Allāh's life, when he decided to appoint *khalīfahs* at different places, 'Azīm al-Dīn was made a *khalīfah* for the interior of Tippera.

1 This is based on geneological evidence and tradition current in the family circles of Sayyid 'Azim al-Dīn Khundkār of Singardah, Bakhshi Miyanj of Baichhara, Faid al-Dīn Munshi of Purva Baisara and Darwesh 'Ali Munshi of Bajarikhula, having been corrected and modified by other data collected during cross-country tour of the then East Pakistan by the present writer in 1957 and 1958.

He died about A.D. 1842. After his death, the khilafat was inherited by his nephews. 'Ata' Allah Munshi (d. *circa.*, A.D. 1858), and Mati' Allah Munshi (d. *circa.*, A.D. 1860); and their descendants claim to be Fara'idi khalifahs down to the present day¹.

Faid al-Din Munshi was a man of some learning². He took prominent part in the village politics, and preached Fara'idi doctrines in the interior of Tippera district. At home, he opened a *Maktab* where he gave lessons to the children in Qur'ān reading and Urdu and elementary Persian, and attracted students from distant villages. One of his favourite students was Darwesh 'Ali Munshi, who, later on, rose to the position of Superintendent khalifah.

5. *Darwesh 'Ali Munshi of Bajarkhula :*

Darwesh 'Ali Munshi of Bajarkhula became a disciple of Dudu Miyan about A. D. 1843. Dudu Miyan intensified his efforts to win over the masses of Eastern Bengal to his side. In the interior of the Chandpur subdivision (of Tippera district) alone, he appointed five khalifahs³ including Darwesh 'Ali. Through their untiring efforts the muslims of a narrow strip of villages from Singardah (near Laksam) to Dawud Kandi river-port (of

1 For instance, Faid al-Din Khundkar of Singardah, grandson of 'Ata' Allah Munshi claims to be a Fara'idi khalifah.

2 See footnote 1 above.

3 The khalifahs of Dudu Miyan were the following :

(i) 'Ata' Allah Munshi of Singardah, (ii) Mati' Allah Munshi of Singardah, (iii) Bakshshi Miyanji of Baichhara, (iv) Faid al-Din Munshi of Purba Baichhara, and (v) Darwesh 'Ali Munshi of Bajarkhula.

Sadar subdivision) were converted wholesale to Fara'idi doctrines.

This spectacular success of the Fara'idi movement in the interior of Tippera is said to have been manipulated by Darwesh 'Ali Munshi for which Dudu Miyān rewarded him by raising him to the position of a Superintendent khalifah. About A.D. 1850, Dudu Miyān paid a visit to the interior of Tippera from the river-port of Chandpur. He went straight to the residence of Darwesh 'Ali Munshi at Bajarikhula, and taking him along proceeded to Singardah and then made a detour of the Fara'idi settlements. He appointed five more khalifahs at different areas and subordinated them to Darwesh 'Ali. It is said that Dudu Miyān formed a Fara'idi *gird* in this part of Tippera which consisted of the present thanas of Kachua, Chandina and Dawud Kandi, and Darwesh 'Ali was commissioned to administer Islamic law and social justice to the Fara'idis of this gird.

After the death of Darwesh 'Ali, his son 'Abd al-Rahmān Munshi became the Superintendent khalifah. He died in B. S. 1322 (A.D. 1915), and was succeeded by his son 'Irfān al-Din Munshi whose Superintendentship was formally renewed by the last Head of the Fara'idis, Badshah Miyān¹.

1 The khalifahs who were subordinated to Darwesh Ali Munshi : (i) Anis Miyanji of Satbaria, (ii) Akhtar Allah Munshi of Kalagaon (iii) Yanus Munshi of Batakashi, (iv) 'Ata' al-Din Akband of Kalasuna, and (v) Safar al-Din Miyanji of Atomur.

It is interesting to note that the successors of these khalifahs do pay their allegiance to the successors of Darwesh 'Ali Munshi down to the present day.

2 The *sanad* of khilafat of 'Irfan al-Din Munshi was personally examined by the present writer during a tour of Bajarikhula in 1958, and its genuineness was confirmed by Badshah Miyan.

APPENDIX 'H'

Fara'idi 'Ulama' of the nineteenth century

Among the Fara'idi theologians of the nineteenth century, Mawlawī Abd al-Jabbār, Mawlawī Thana Allāh and Mawlawī 'Abd al-Hayy were very prominent. But despite our strenuous attempts, very little of their biographical data could be recovered.

Mawlawī 'Abd al-Jabbār was a resident of Madaripur subdivision of the Faridpur district and a disciple of Haji Sharī'at Allāh. He was a colleague of Dudu Miyān. He came to the prominence about A. D. 1867 when a debate was held between him and Mawlāna Karāmat 'Alī. Subsequently, as we have seen in Chapters i, iv and vii, he dominated the intellectual life of the Fara'idis. He appears to have died about A. D. 1903.

Mawlawī Thana Allāh was a resident of Faridpur district. He is claimed to have been educated in Hindustan, *i.e.*, at Lucknow or Delhi. The Fara'idis refer to him generally with the laudable title "Rā's as al-Muha-ddithīn", *i.e.*, the crown of the doctors of Prophetic tradition. According to the Fara'idi sources, he took prominent part in the debate of Dawud Kandi held between the Fara'idis and the followers of local customs in A. D. 1903. He appears to have died soon after.

Mawlawī 'Abd al-Hayy was a resident of Madaripur subdivision and served as a teacher of theology in the Fara'idi Madrasah of Bahadurpur during the time of Khān Bahādur Sa'īd al-Dīn Ahmad.

APPENDIX 'I'

The Farā'idi 'Ulama' Conference of 1947

After independence in 1947, the Farā'idiṣ felt the need of re-examining their principle with regard to the congregational prayers. An 'ulama conference was, therefore, held by the Farā'idi leaders in October, 1947, at Rekabi Bazar. A hand-bill, entitled "Jumā Samvandhe Mimānsā,"¹ which is available to us, shows that the conference was convened by Abā Khālid Rāshīd al-Dīn Aḥmad alias Bādshāh Miyan, the then head of the Farā'idiṣ, and was presided over, by Mawlānā Abu'l-Barakāt 'Abd al-Rauf Dānapurī who was especially invited from United Province or Uttar Prades of India.

In the hand-bill Bādshāh Miyan declares that in former times the Farāidiṣ, deemed it unlawful to hold the prayers of *Jumāh* and *'Id* in this country because of its being Dār al-Harb. But since, by the grace of God Pakistan has been established, these prayers have become lawful in this country. There is, however, a second condition, laid down by the Hanafī Jurists, which must be fulfilled for holding congregational prayers. This relates to the status of the place. For, in the opinion of the Hanafī jurists it is not lawfully permitted to hold the prayers of *Jumāh* and *'Id* in the villages. These

1 The above hand-bill is a joint communique bearing the signature of Bādshāh Miyan and Mawlānā Danapuri, published in Bengali from Purnakhali in the district of Bakarganj but released from Bahādurpur. It bears the B.S. date, the 3rd Kartik, 1358 and A.D. the 2nd October, 1947; i.e. 3 days after the conference, which was held on 29th and 30th Ashvin, B.S. 1358. The hand-bill was seen by the present writer at Rekabi Bazar in 1958, and a true copy was made, which is now in the possession of the present writer.

prayers can be held only in the towns. There is also difference of opinions with regard to the definition of "Township". Taking all these into consideration, we are inclined to hold the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Id* in the towns of Pakistan and in such other settlements which though are not generally regarded as towns yet resemble township on account of the existence of roads and lanes, large settlements and market places in them.

In short, we deem it lawful to hold the prayers of *Juma'h* and *Id* in the district and subdivisional towns of Pakistan as well as in such settlements and ports which resemble the subdivisional town and the population of which is not less than 4,000. In the latter places, these prayers are to be held by way of caution.

Mawlana Dānapuri endorsed the above opinion and opined that the reverport of Rekabi Bazar¹ was a small town or a big qasbah. Hence, the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Id* ought to be held in it by way of caution.

1 It may be noted that when the present writer visited Rekabi Bazar in 1958. Its population was estimated to be 3,000.

APPENDIX 'J'

Indigo Planter in rural Bengal

In A.D. 1878, an interesting case was tried by justice Pontifex at the Calcutta High Court involving the murder of a *ra'iyat*, Shaykh Munsif by Mr. White, an indigo planter of Nadiya. Mr. White was accused of killing Shaykh Munsif by physical assault and evidences were produced in such details and clarity that there was no room for doubt. It is alleged that Mr. White was released by the partiality of the Jury¹ and the Judge. The following excerpt is reproduced from the daily *Englishman*, published from Calcutta.

Monday, 8 July, 1878²

"The Judge—I cannot tell you, gentlemen of the Jury, that there is no evidence ; but I cannot say what you think of it. I must say I think that if you believe the evidence, you can only find the prisoner guilty of murder. There are no links wanting in the evidence.

The Foreman—We don't wish to hear the defence as we have already made up our minds.

The Clerk of the Crown asked the jury if they had agreed upon their verdict.

1 The Jury consisted of 8 Europeans and one Hindu gentleman.

2 *Englishman*, dated 8 July 1878, p. 3. column 5 : the judgment in the case "Empress vs. White." It may be noted that the witnesses were examined for two days before the judgment was pronounced and the full proceedings are available in the *Englishman* dated the 6th July (p. 3, column 2-4) and the 8th July (p. 3. column. 3-5).

The Foreman said they had ; they found the prisoner not guilty of all the charges against him .

The Judge—I quite agree with you, gentlemen of the Jury.

The evidence is utterly unreliable.

The accused was then discharged."

On the 8th July, the *Englishman* commented editorially as follows¹:

"The trial 'Empress vs. White' is a striking example of how formidable a weapon the criminal procedure may become in the hands of the natives of the country, and of the dangerous position of a European in the Mufassal.

An English gentleman, Manager of a factory in the Nuddea District, is charged with murder of an atrocious character, is discharged by one Magistrate, and twelve months afterwards is committed to the High Court by another.

"Subsequently, the late prosecutor of Mr. White urged in a letter published in the *Englishman*², 'not to prosecute the witnesses' who gave evidence against Mr. White but to try to find out the man behind the scene who was the real conspirator."

1 *Englishman*, 8 July, 1878, p. 2, column 3.

2 *Englishman*, 13 July, 1878, p. 2, column 1.

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